This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Slav-4341.18.411 Bound
JAN 18 1899

THE SLAVIC COLLECTION

Harvard College Library

GIFT OF

Archibald Cary Coolidge, Ph.D.
(Class of 1887.)

Received 1 July, 1895.

# NADIA;

*OR, OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.*

# NADIA;

OR

## *OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

R. ORLOFFSKY,

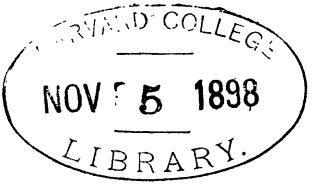
BY THE BARONESS LANGENAU.

VOL. II.

London:
SWAN SONNENSCHEIN, LOWREY & CO.,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1888.

Slav 4341.18.411
~~Sbob 4349.2.411~~

831 43/3




Mrs. J. R. Coolidge.

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

# NADIA;

OR,

## Out of the Beaten Track.

### CHAPTER I.

TOWARDS evening Nadia was taken seriously ill. The doctor, who had been sent for from town, shook his head gravely. "Science," he said, "cannot define beforehand the turn which illness will take; it can only state the case clearly. Her youth, however, allows us to hope for a favourable issue." This somewhat enigmatical verdict frightened Anna Grigorievna very much, and she hardly left her niece, neither by night nor by day. The patient happily did not hear it; she was lying unconscious in her bed. She remained in this state for two whole days, the doctor hinting cautiously at typhus, which she had probably caught among the sick peasants. She lay the whole time motionless; sometimes only broken words of anguish escaped her lips. She seemed in a great dread of somebody, and from time to time the names of Boroffsky and Neradovitch were pronounced by her with tokens of unaccountable alarm.

Anna Grigorievna nursed her most tenderly, as if now for the first time fully aware of the bonds of love which united them, and herself watched at her bedside. Nadia's youth carried the day; the doctor's fear was not realized. On the third day she awoke as out of a deep sleep, and her sweet face, a little paled and thinned, instead of expressing past sufferings, had only that soft, enchanting helplessness which little children display under the caresses of their mothers. Her first answer to Anna Grigorievna was a bright smile. "I felt so happy, dear aunt," she said, as she tried, but in vain, to raise herself.

A great change had taken place within her. For the first time since her childhood, the proud refractory feelings of her heart were at peace, and a deep sensation of joy pervaded her, as if she had reached the harbour at last, and had no cares for her future any more. She behaved with an unwonted submission; and when Dmitry entered her sick room for the first time, and pressed her small, wasted hands within his, there was no longer any trace of illwill to be seen in her eyes; but her heart gave an awful throb, and she hardly knew whether the feeling which filled her heart was one of joy or alarm.

Though summer was in its full glory, it lasted more than a fortnight before Nadia was able to leave her room. But she showed no impatience, seeming now for the first time fully alive to all the comforts

of her home. There was, moreover, no want of solicitude among the neighbours. Boroffsky drove over to ask for her health more than once, while Elena Michaïlovna came daily, bringing with her some of those gigantic strawberries of which her gardener was so proud. Nadia, however, did not seem to enjoy those visits very much; and Elena herself, though so very lavish of kind words, never stayed long in the room of the young girl, as if instinctively feeling that her presence there did not give her much pleasure.

With Dmitry, on the contrary, she had long conversations, thus drawing more and more tightly together the meshes of the unseen net she was throwing over him; for, we must openly confess it, another much more common feeling was slowly stealing itself into his heart, taking the place of that pure, somewhat vague love which had been the result of the idealism of his student's years. It was only due to the involuntary self-deception to which we all incline, that he did not observe the approach of this new, but this time truly, earthly love.

Anna Grigorievna was perfectly aware of the reasons of Elena's frequent visits. The more she saw of her the more she liked her. In the beginning she had only thought of her fickleness towards Dmitry, but now all was changed. His marriage with her, to which she had been so vividly opposed in former days, now presented itself under a wholly altered

aspect. She wished it ardently, though she hid these feelings carefully from her son.

It was on a grey, cloudy day, about the end of June. A slight rain-shower had fallen in the morning, and the grass on the lawn, all sparkling with radiant waterdrops, perfumed the air with its soft, aromatic odour. In spite of the dampness, Nadia suddenly wanted to take a turn in the garden. She took Dmitry's arm, and leaning firmly on it—for she felt very weak still—went out into the fresh spring air. This old garden, which she knew so well, had assumed a new, marvellous aspect of youth and beauty in her eyes. She listened trustingly and quietly to what her cousin said; though his words themselves did not arrest her attention, so much as the warm echo which these plain and straightforward words found in her own heart. When they returned home, they met Elena, who had just come with Jenny. It was the first time since Nadia's illness that she had taken the young girl with her. They walked upstairs together, and Nadia felt a sort of sickening feeling creeping over her as Elena fixed her large, beautiful eyes searchingly on her face. Her unconstrained and easy manner, as well as her great intimacy with the Koretzky family, vexed and excited Nadia. They had hardly been five minutes in her room, before Elena left the two girls alone, and walked into the drawing-room to join Anna Grigorievna.

As soon as they were left to themselves, Jenny wanted to learn from Nadia the reason of Volodia's neglect of her; but Nadia anticipated the question.

"How much Volodia will regret not being at home," she said. "He has been in town for three days already."

Jenny slightly pouted. She knew very well why he had ceased to come and see her, but she did not like him to amuse himself in town. He had gone to see his former school-comrades, Blumstein and Elborussi, the sons of rich tradespeople, of Jewish origin, two great radicals, who delighted in a glass of champagne while talking over the great social questions, and gave the Tartar at the restaurant three rubles for their cup of tea.

Jenny heard all these details from Nadia, who could hardly suppress her laughter on seeing how vexed her young friend looked.

"But do you know, Nadia, I can't believe your cousin is such a great radical as he says," said Jenny.

"Nor do I, Jenny dear," answered Nadia, smiling.

"But you would be delighted if he were, would you not?"

"On the contrary, I hate those high-flown phrases of his." Jenny gazed at her in silent wonder.

"How can that be? Forgive me, but I always thought that Vladimir Alexandrovitch was not indifferent to you!"

As she said this, a scarlet flush mounted to her brow.

Nadia immediately comforted her on this account, telling her laughingly that she was looking for the mote in her neighbour's eye.

"And you can assure me," asked Jenny hesitatingly and a little shyly, "that you do not try to nurse the holy fire of radicalism in his heart? But you, it seems——"

The gaiety quickly died out of Nadia's eyes, and though Jenny did her best to enliven the conversation, it languished, and soon stopped. Jenny's words had touched a sore place in her heart. It put her in mind of the change which had taken place within her a short time ago, and which she looked upon as a treachery.

Towards evening Volodia returned from town. The company of his friends had not cured his spleen, and he felt, moreover, a burning shame at having spent these days in such senseless riotings. He answered his mother's questions rather curtly, and hurried up to Nadia's room.

"Nadia," he whispered, as if afraid of being overheard, "I have most important news for you. Neradovitch is here. I saw him."

Volodia seemed quite impressed with the importance of this news. But Nadia's face did not express the joy he had expected. It was rather wonder, wrath, fright; all except joy.

"No! it is impossible. You only fancy this."

"No, Nadia, it is true," he went on. "Neradovitch has already spent three weeks in our neighbourhood; has been in our village, too. Wherever he goes he finds some friends; he is a real genius!"

Nadia guessed who these friends were. "The son of the priest, certainly, through whom I got his letter; and then Bruskoff, perhaps," she thought; and, remembering that she had done her best to bring the latter to Biälastolby, a deep flush spread over her face.

"He relies a great deal on our peasantry," said Volodia, as if a peasants' revolt was a thing to rejoice at. "He developed a great plan to me."

Volodia was very apt to entertain great delusions. Neradovitch had never developed anything to him at all.

"He lives in the town under the name of Aladdin, and his papers have been examined by the police. He warned me never to call him by his real name, but he allowed me to tell you that he will be with us very soon. Only fancy! he knew that you were here with us, and put lots of questions to me about you. Who could have foreseen that we should be fellow-workers at the great work of the people's deliverance? But, Nadia, you don't look glad at all!"

She was spared a reply, for Dmitry appeared in the doorway.

"Not a word before him, please," she whispered, squeezing Volodia's hand.

"I forgot to tell you who was here to-day," said Dmitry to his brother; "Jenny came over with her mother, and asked after you."

Volodia's eyes sparkled. These few words sufficed to make him forget all about Neradovitch and his high genius and lofty plans; he now only thought of the young girl's sweet face.

When Nadia remained alone, she brooded long over all that she had heard from Volodia. The face which she had not seen so long suddenly rose before her, with its scoffing expression, asking her to account for her apostasy. And for the first time in her life a nameless dread of the unknown future rose within her breast.

## CHAPTER II.

JENNY ORDINZOFF was sitting on her favourite bench under a large old elm tree in the garden at Nikolsky. She had just returned from bathing in the river, and her long silky hair was falling in luxurious waves down her back; a clear, cool summer day was drawing to its close, and the shadows of the trees were lengthening on the lawn, still bathed in sunshine. The young girl was holding an English novel in her hand, but she was not reading. At her years no book tells such interesting, mysterious tales as the soft rustling of the leaves on a summer evening, and the eloquent whisperings of nature.

She suddenly started on hearing quick, manly steps on the gravel of the footpath, and looked wonderingly at Volodia as he drew near to her.

During his ride to Nikolsky he had rehearsed at least a hundred times what he intended to say to Jenny, but at the sight of her such a great rush of joy overcame him that he forgot all that he wanted to say, and the conversation took an unexpected turn.

"I asked for Elena Michaïlovna," he said, "but I

was told that she was not at home, and that you were in the garden."

"Yes; mamma has gone to town, and is not coming back before dinner-time. Miss Finch is unwell; so you see I am reduced to my own society."

She said this hesitatingly, raising her eyes to him as if not quite sure whether they ought to remain alone, but the sight of his embarrassed face quieted her.

"He is very shy," she thought, "so it does not matter. Let us take a turn in the garden," she added aloud, fancying a walk to be the proper thing for them to do.

As very often happened of late, Volodia did not know what to talk about to her. This vexed him particularly, because, during the first days of their acquaintance, he had chattered most unconstrainedly with her.

"You know that we were yesterday evening at Biälastolby, I presume?" she said. "I think Nadia looks a great deal better now."

"I was told that you were kind enough to inquire after me," he said ironically; and then feeling what a stupid thing it was to have said, he blushed furiously.

These few words sufficed to change Jenny's kind disposition, and she felt very much inclined to tease him.

"Perhaps I did," she answered indifferently; "but

I quite forget what Nadia answered me; you had gone somewhere on business, I fancy."

Volodia again blushed, but this time more with anger than with shyness.

"I see that it would have been better if I had not thought of coming here to-day," he said.

"For you or for me?" she asked proudly, turning her eyes coldly on him.

"Eugenia Alexandrovna, did you never wonder why I spent a whole month without ever coming here?"

She stopped, as if wrapping herself in an icy, almost lofty indifference.

"Why ought I to wonder at that? You say a whole month—well, yes, I think it is rather long since you were here last.

Volodia felt so angry with her that he was almost tempted to turn away, leave the garden, never to return any more, but he did not feel equal to taking such a decision. He stood motionless before her, vainly trying to master his emotion, while his face showed signs of the burning wish to find words either to express his wrath or to make his peace with her.

"Eugenia Alexandrovna," he said at last, with the resolution of despair, feeling as if he was tumbling downwards in some abyss, "why are you so changed towards me? You must know why I ceased coming here; but you do it on purpose."

He stopped, feeling unable to go on. She began to pity him, and resolved to come to his aid.

"Now, what did I do on purpose?" she asked, in a half whisper, and her sweet eyes rested upon his face with an almost tender expression; this was sufficient to raise his spirits.

"Have you really forgotten our drive to the Kurmiloffsky meadow?" he cried eagerly.

"You mean that evening when you gave such daring proofs of your horsemanship?" she replied archly.

But his shyness had now entirely disappeared, and even this joke did not offend him. He began to pour out such a torrent of burning words, of vows and reproaches, that it was Jenny's turn to blush and tremble, so openly did they express the feelings which he had never dared till now to mention to her.

"Do you really fancy that Sokolnitzky——" she cried, and then stopped, frightened at the imprudence of these words.

"You must at least know, Eugenia Alexandrovna, that, thanks to you, I have spent the most wretched days of my whole life."

She did not answer. A hot flush mounted to her brow, and her fingers nervously twitched a large maple leaf which she held in her hands. They walked silently farther on in the garden, to that part where the old lime trees stood in long, regular rows; here Elena had not yet succeeded in introduc-

ing modern innovations: numerous small pathways crossed and recrossed one another, leading into still deeper shades, after the pattern of the past century's taste.

"We have never been so far as this!" exclaimed Volodia, gazing at a small lawn, surrounded with venerable lime trees, looking very much like church cupolas, with their rounded crowns. "How very decorative all this looks! We new people of to-day seem quite out of place here; powdered marquises ought to wander in this deep shade!"

"But I delight in these old things," cried Jenny; "let them be as decorative as possible, they don't prevent me——"

They both burst out laughing; there was so little stiffness about the youthful proprietor of Nikolsky that even those pompous, old-fashioned ladies would have found it impossible to prevent her jokes and pranks. They talked on in quite a friendly way, almost with childish glee, as if there had never been a misunderstanding between them; some unconscious harmony seemed to fill their hearts, that sweet harmony which is quickly destroyed when observed. They sat down on a wooden bench, standing on a large rounded place under old shady trees. The darkness which reigned here gave them an unknown but very sweet feeling of trust in each other. Volodia's eyes watched every movement of Jenny's slender body, every feature of her lovely face, as if he was for

the first time fully alive to the beauty of this face. Her whole being, with her frolicsome, dark eyes, her heavy plaits of soft hair, seemed in his eyes the fulfilment of some fairy vision. No, not a vision! Not even in his wildest dreams could he have imagined such perfect beauty. And then there was nothing unearthly at all in her still undeveloped beauty; on the contrary, she was the poetry of life itself, full of its movement and beauty, though as yet unconscious of it!

Between two huge lime trees hung a swing, firmly fastened to the two trunks. Jenny sat down in it, beginning to rock herself to and fro. Volodia, reclining against a branch, went on chatting with her without taking his eyes off her for a single moment.

"Listen to me," she suddenly said, putting on a serious air, "I have long wanted to put a question to you; what are you going to do after this winter? Enter upon active service?"

"That's a very important question; what am I to do, after all?" Active service? but then you know my convictions."

"Bother your convictions!" cried Jenny, covering her ears with both her hands; "but I really must tell you you can't go on in this way, shooting, reading small tracts, and doing nothing at all."

Volodia tried to laugh, though he felt deeply vexed at this unexpected attack; he was so far from thinking of the future, especially just now.

"I can perfectly well understand your not wishing

to go to Petersburg, after all that happened there to your brother," she continued, with an air of importance; "he told mamma all the details of it. But do you know what I have devised for you?"

Volodia was dumbfounded to see that this youthful fairy had deigned to think of him, just as he was accusing her of having entirely given him up.

"My plan is perfection. You ought to remain here and take the care of the estate off your mother's hands while Dmitry goes away. Mamma says he wishes it most ardently, and wants to go very far. Then you ought to stand for the next elections, I think, and be appointed marshal of noblesse in the place of Ukhoff. He is said to be such a wicked man."

"I marshal!" exclaimed Volodia aghast, "and my con——"

"Again that word! I tell you I won't allow you to pronounce it, at least in my presence. And then you have no convictions at all, I rather think."

If Volodia had had to choose between the little sorceress, on whom his eyes were riveted now, and those convictions, I am very much afraid that the latter would have been sacrificed. Happily the choice was not offered to him; he only fancied them very small and unimportant, compared to the answer he wanted to read in her eyes just now.

"I don't know what will be my lot in life," he said solemnly, "but there is one thing I must tell you,

Eugenia Alexandrovna, that there is not a being in the whole world so dear to me as——"

She did not allow him to finish; it suddenly occurred to her that it would not be right to remain any longer alone with him. She jumped out of the swing, but her feet did not catch the lime trunk that served as stepping-stone, and she would infallibly have fallen to the ground if Volodia had not caught her. He clasped her involuntarily in his arms, and for one short moment she gave herself up to this embrace. His lips touched her downy cheek.

"Jenny, my darling," he whispered.

But she started away from him, gazing at his face with such indignant, upbraiding eyes that his gaze sank before hers. Wrath and shame struggled for mastery in her soul, though another unknown feeling prompted her to forgive him. He stood before her as crestfallen as a scolded schoolboy.

"Forgive me, Jenny dear," he said, in such a submissive tone that she could not but forgive him. He caught hold of her hand, somewhat hesitatingly, pressing it most tenderly, and sueing for pardon.

"Will you never more talk to me of your convictions?" she asked, without drawing away her hand.

"Alas! do I ever think of them?" he cried, carrying her slender fingers to his lips.

"Well, I consider these words as a pledge for the future," she said archly.

They turned towards the house, walking very slowly.

"Well, and you, Jenny, would you ever consent to spend the whole year round in the country?" he asked, hardly knowing why.

"I am rather fond of the country; but, please, with what right do you call me Jenny? You never did so before."

She bestowed a look on him which she deemed very severe, though there was not the slightest trace of severity in her large velvet orbs. They returned to the bench where he had found her reading, and she was struck on seeing how the shadows had lengthened on the lawn, and how silent the twittering birds in the depth of the shrubs had grown.

"Half-past six," she said, looking at her watch; "now you must go away quickly, very quickly. I can't invite you to dine *tête-à-tête* with me, I suppose," she added, with an arch smile.

Ten minutes later Volodia was cantering back to Biälastolby; his blood coursed madly through his veins, and wild, joyous thoughts whirled in his brain.

"Mitia, Mitia," he cried, on seeing his brother at the entrance door of the manor-house, "oh! if you knew how happy, how awfully happy I am!—happier than I have ever been. Do you understand?"

"You have been to Nikolsky?" asked Dmitry, smiling.

"Well, yes, yes."

And Volodia told him breathlessly that he had resolved upon settling down at Biälastolby, in order to become a model farmer, and to be marshal of noblesse in the place of Ukhoff. It seemed to him that all must be done in this way, that it could not possibly be altered, and that he himself had made this plan long, long ago.

"What do you think that Blumstein and Elborussi will say to this?" asked Dmitry, laughing.

"Let them go to the devil, much I care!" he answered resolutely.

"And Tshernoknischnikoff?" cried Dmitry after him.

But he had already reached the stable-door and alighted. No one in the house guessed the cause of his overwhelming spirits.

## CHAPTER III.

TWO days later the elections for the town council took place. Volodia had gone to town to receive his uncle, Peter Nicolaievitch, who was expected by the early train from Moscow. Though the latter had passed the night very comfortably in the railway carriage, he thought it necessary to complain of the long journey, the fatigue, and the want of order which had prevented him from getting a suitable compartment. He even grumbled at the large room they had given him at the Hôtel de Petersburg,—the best hotel in the town,—at the cream they served him for his tea, at the pavements in the streets; in a word, he was in the worst of spirits, and prepared very unwillingly for his journey to Biälastolby.

The elections did not take up much time. Ukhoff was in a state of excitement, for he dreaded Dmitry's being elected in his place. It is true he declared that he was too old and felt too tired to accept this post of marshal for another term, yet he would have been very disappointed if his friends had not supported him, and carried him safely through.

When the ayes and noes were counted, it was

proved that he was only indebted for his election to one single voice. However insignificant this triumph was, yet he gloried in it, and received the congratulations of his friends with a victorious smile.

The elections being over, Volodia went to look after his horses. His coachman used to put up at a post-house somewhat on the verge of the town whenever he came to C——. Peter Nicolaïevitch had already gone on to Biälastolby in Dmitry's carriage, as the latter intended to drive over for dinner to Nikolsky with his friend Tomiline. But it was in vain that Volodia looked for the coachman; the courtyard of the post-house seemed quite empty, except for some hens scratching the dung-hill, and a pair of horses before a telega, who were eating their oats and whisking their tails against the gadflies. The young man had already shouted three times for the host, when a peasant suddenly started up behind the telega, and advanced towards him.

"Well, Barine," he said, without taking off his cap, "are you looking for your horses? They have been taken to Dievitch Slovoda. A pair of first-rate horses, I say."

Volodia started. The peasant's voice struck him as being well known.

"Don't you know me, Batushka?"[1] the other continued, laughing. "I am better disguised this time than the last, it seems."

[1] Little father, word of endearment.

And in fact, this ugly peasant, in a greasy kaftan, and with reddish whiskers, did not at all look like Neradovitch. This meeting did not seem to give any pleasure to Volodia.

"No one would ever have recognised you under this disguise," he answered, somewhat embarrassed; "how did you get to this post-house?"

Neradovitch looked carefully about him; the court-yard was empty.

"We are gathering together in your neighbourhood; the towns are safe no longer," he said, in a whisper.

"So you are no longer the merchant Aladdin," said Volodia, feeling a strong wish to rid himself as quickly as possible of this new companion.

"The merchant Aladdin has started for Simbirsk with the steamer," he answered under his breath. "You see before you the peasant Efime Petroff. Do not forget this. I sent your horses away because I knew you were coming."

"Now, deuce take it!" mentally ejaculated Volodia, perfectly at a loss to understand why Neradovitch wished to meet him.

"Yes, I wanted very much to see you, in order to entrust you with a message for your cousin, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he said, drawing an envelope out of his breast-pocket, his small eyes glaring mockingly; "may I hope that it will reach its destination to-day. I am afraid you don't like it, but I am

obliged to profit by every opportunity that presents itself."

"Give it to me," cried Volodia, snatching at the letter, but at the same time his eyes tried to avoid those of Neradovitch, and a flush of embarrassment mounted to his brow.

In the corridor, behind the door, approaching steps were now heard. Neradovitch quickly returned to his telega, and Volodia, at last espying the coachman, ordered him to come with the carriage to the Hôtel de Petersburg. On his way thither, he met Boroffsky in a droskhy.

"Vladimir Alexandrovitch," he cried, stopping, "are you going home? Will you take me along with you? My horses were taken by the examining magistrate, and there is such a rush here to-day that I can't get any."

Volodia readily consented. But when he found himself sitting alongside of Boroffsky, a feeling of dread overcame him; he fancied that the sharp eyes of the magistrate must pierce through his breast-pocket, and the letter entrusted to him almost burned his skin. He would have given a great deal to be able to break every bond between him and this mysterious man, so downcast did he feel at the thought that he was helping, though most involuntarily, at the dark, underground work of Neradovitch. But the thoughts of Boroffsky were just now very far from his young companion, just as far as from his own important

affairs. Quite a different care weighed on him. He was going to Biälastolby to make his proposal to Nadia. He had struggled as much as he could against this all-engrossing love, at first laughing at it, then denying the possibility that love could indeed awake in his ambitious heart. Could he, whose life was exclusively devoted to the mind's lofty mysteries, fall in love like a schoolboy? This idea was simply ridiculous. But in the meanwhile the young girl had stolen herself so completely into his heart, taking possession even of his intellect, that his eyes were at last opened. He was obliged to confess that there exists in the world a feeling so all-absorbing, so paramount, that no ambition resists it; and he submitted entirely to it, and to the rush of nameless joy which overflowed his heart. Just because it seemed such a very senseless thing to marry a portionless girl, belonging to a party from which he had withdrawn with withering scorn, he now wished it most passionately. She was the first innocent, independent dream he had ever had, and seemed to rise on the horizon of his life like a saving angel.

They found Anna Grigorievna on the garden terrace talking with Peter Nicolaïevitch. Though he had only spent a few hours with her, she seemed perfectly tired of his presence. Her features had got that weary, somewhat malicious expression common to people who are at a loss what to say to their guests. He had wounded her self-love as landed proprietor,

talking of the bad state of the roads, and had done nothing but complain of the dust, the gadflies, the intolerable heat, and the draughts in the hotels. Then he had compared the neighbourhood to a dirty table-cloth, looking neither grey nor yellow, particularly displeasing to him, spoiled as he was by the beauties of the Finlandian bay. At last—and this was his greatest crime—he turned away with disgust from the batvinia[1] with oysters, and the gribuis[2] with sour cream. In a word, there seemed to be a great gulf between him and the mistress of Biälastolby. No wonder that Boroffsky's arrival was hailed with great joy by her, especially when she was told the purpose of his visit. Nadia had gone out for a walk immediately after dinner, wishing to avoid the somewhat coarse jests of the old general. While waiting for her return, Anna Grigorievna took Boroffsky into her morning-room, a sanctuary into which no one was ever admitted but very near relations and her two favourite servants, Terenty the butler and Aniussa the housekeeper. There she listened to his disclosure without trying to hide her joy; but Nicholas Ossipovitch experienced an overwhelming feeling of shyness, unknown to him for many years, until he found at last the fitting words in which to tell her that he had no greater wish than to become the husband of her niece.

[1] Cold soup of herbs and quass.

[2] Sort of mushroom.

"May the Lord's blessing be on you," she answered, deeply moved, her tears almost blinding her. "Love and protect her as I have loved and protected her. She has been a good daughter to me, though her spirit is sometimes a little foolish and unsettled. You will always have to be forbearing with her. But why do I tell you this? If you only love each other, all will be well."

As soon as the light-blue dress of the young girl was visible among the trees, Boroffsky hurried out to her, and Anna Grigorievna went to communicate her glad tidings to Peter Nicolaïevitch and Volodia. She was struck with the expression of Volodia's face, which did not give any signs of joy on hearing this piece of news.

"Frankly, I can't understand why you think this such a piece of good luck," he said, with a shake of his head.

A more explicit answer was not to be got out of him.

Two whole hours passed without their hearing or seeing anything of Nadia or Boroffsky. Anna Grigorievna lost patience at last, and rang the bell for Terenty.

"Nicholas Ossipovitch left half an hour ago. He ordered me to express his regrets to you," said Terenty, with the same indifferent face he always wore, as if delivering a most ordinary message.

"What! left?" almost screamed Anna Grigorievna.

"He asked me to send for a carriage to take him back to town," continued Terenty, in the same tone, "so Jacob ordered the dun gelding to be put to the telega."

"The telega! for Nicholas Ossipovitch!" cried the old lady, an angry flush mounting to her brow. "This is too bad, indeed! Why did you not take the victoria?"

"We did not know you wanted this."

"And where is Nadeshda Sergeievna?"

"Upstairs in her own room."

Anna Grigorievna hurried upstairs to her niece as quickly as her legs could carry her. The door of the room was locked, and she had to wait long before it was opened.

"What does this mean?" she exclaimed angrily. "Why has Boroffsky gone away? Did he not talk to you?"

Nadia did not answer at once. Her face was flushed, and she had the greatest difficulty to find the words to explain what had happened. At last she confessed, reluctantly and in broken words, that he had proposed to her, and that neither to-day nor ever afterwards would she consent to become his wife.

"But why? have you gone mad?" cried her aunt, almost beside herself; "you have ruined your whole life."

"Oh, auntie, please do leave me alone; don't worry me with your reproaches and complaints."

She did not succeed in getting a more definite answer, so she left her at last in the highest indignation.

Peter Nicolaïevitch only shrugged his shoulders on hearing that Nadia had refused Boroffsky.

"The girl is stark mad!" he said; "I told you that nothing good would come out of this adoption."

Volodia alone was not astonished.

"I knew this beforehand," he replied; "she is in love with Dmitry."

"Dmitry! impossible!" his mother cried aghast; "they are always wrangling."

"Only in order to make peace afterwards," answered the young man, showing this time an unwonted sagacity.

Anna Grigorievna was not prepared to hear this, and for the first time since Nadia's arrival she felt a hostile feeling towards her rise within her breast.

"Mamma, allow me to go and talk to her," pleaded Volodia.

"Yes, do; I could not talk quietly to her just now."

On hearing Volodia's voice, the young girl immediately opened her door. Though she still felt very excited, she found it much easier to unburden herself to Volodia. She told him how difficult it had been to withstand Boroffsy's almost despairing entreaties. She did not know why, but she had always

felt, on seeing him, an unknown dread, which almost prevented her from finding the words with which to soften her refusal. She had evidently not succeeded, for he had listened to her with undisguised rage.

"I am no coward, you know, Volodia," she said, "but I assure you I trembled at what I read in his eyes. It was neither anger, nor regret, but simply cold, avenging hatred. I can't feel at peace ever since."

"Well, Nadia, I have other unexpected news to give you. I met Neradovitch in town. He had been waiting for me at the post-house, disguised as a peasant, in order to ask me to give you this letter without fail."

On hearing this name, the young girl turned as pale as death; she grasped the letter, which Volodia held out to her, and stood half-unconsciously listening to his words, without taking in their sense.

"Leave me alone, please," she said, unable to master her excitement; "I'll tell you all as soon as I have read this letter. Alas, Volodia, I don't know why I feel so depressed, as if some great misfortune was threatening us."

As soon as Volodia left her, Nadia broke the seal of the letter with trembling fingers. It was as follows,—

"I don't know, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, whether you will ever receive this letter. I settled to-day in your neighbourhood. I don't fancy you will be very

glad to hear of this resolution, but you know how difficult it is to get rid of our bonds. I told you so. Do you remember that evening when you besought me to admit you within 'our society'?

"Now the time has come for you to prove your faith to us. We can't wait any longer, and to-night you will know what service we expect from you. At half-past eleven I hope to meet you at the Feodor Apiary—you see I already know the localities here about pretty well—when all will be asleep in your house. You won't regret this little walk too much, I trust. I never doubt your granting me this favour. You know that our arms are long and reach far. If there is any one among your friends for whose safety you are anxious, you will come, I know; for your own welfare you don't care. So then *da svidania*,[1] I hope.

The letter was not signed. Her hands sunk down on her knees; an unconquerable weakness overcame her; the events of the day had already unstrung her nerves; she did not feel equal to this difficult position. What could she do? Return to that man and put herself once more under his dominion? or tell him quite openly that she scorned his power, and refused to acknowledge it any longer? But was she free to act thus? was she not tied to him? and not to him alone, but to the work, to which she had given herself up freely? And if she did not

[1] The French: *au revoir.*

go? Was she pledged to obey a man whom she had ceased to esteem long ago? But if her disobeying him was to draw down a misfortune on the heads of those who had sheltered her when she was abandoned by the rest of the world? The only way of learning what he was devising was to go and speak to him. It flashed through her brain that she ought to go, in order to save the family Koretzky, and thus prove her gratitude to them. But in doing this would she not become a traitor? Whatever she did, she must prove a traitor, either to her present or to her former friends. No other choice was open to her. Why could she not follow the longings of her heart? If that awful past had not stood before her like a debt to be paid, she would not have hesitated a moment; but this duty now seemed the holier the more she wanted to get rid of it. She could not come to a decision. Happily, several hours were still wanting to the appointed hour.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Dmitry and Tomiline reached Nikolsky, they already found Boris with Elena. He was giving her a very gay and comical description of the elections; but she hardly listened to him, and when Dmitry came, she gave distinct signs of impatience. Boris had long been aware of the passion of his cousin for Dmitry, so, breaking off his conversation with a mocking smile, he turned towards Jenny. But this proved a failure, too. The young girl received his attentions in a rather off-hand way; and after dinner, when they went down into the garden, she caught hold of Tomiline's arm, and began questioning him very closely about the elections. It was evident that she took a great interest in this weighty affair; and though Volodia's name had never been pronounced between them, Tomiline knew the secret reason of her curiosity.

"Do you know what idea passed my brain to-day?" he asked, smiling. I thought that our mutual friend, Vladimir Alexandrovitch ought to be made a district marshal one of these days. He conquered all hearts to-day."

"Indeed!" she answered, with a studied indifference, while a treacherous blush mounted to her cheeks. She bowed her head and began to draw some fanciful designs on the gravel with her parasol. Tomiline left before tea-time. Boris, who had come to spend a few days with his cousin, withdrew early, complaining of a bad headache. After tea, which was served in the small corner-room, Dmitry, who had had his horse sent over to him, rose, in order to leave, but Elena asked him to stay a little longer. They were alone in the room. The melodious sounds of the "Sonate Pathétique," by Beethoven, justly and well executed by Jenny's quick fingers, penetrated into their recess.

"Well, you had a specimen to-day of our first society here," said Elena, sinking down on her couch, which was placed in a dimly lit-up corner of the room; "the impressions which you carried away with you were not very enlivening, were they?"

Dmitry assured her that whatever impression he had got of the people, his interest for the work itself had not diminished.

"I had no very high expectations," he said, sitting down near her; "besides, I am not one of those who are easily discouraged, and give up what they have begun."

"So you are determined to bury yourself and your talents in this dull province!" she exclaimed; "what a pity, for I have good news for you from Petersburg;

yesterday brought me a letter from Tchistopolsky. He writes that he will be delighted to find you a place in the ministry, and thus give you an opening. Look here," and she took from her writing-table a paper as thick as parchment, covered all over with a handsome, but certainly not legible, handwriting, one of those official handwritings of which it is said, "Que celui qui la posséde joint la flexibilité d'une femme à la ténacité d'un ambitieux." "He writes as follows: 'Malgré la superfétation, dont souffrent tous les emplois, malgré cette pléthore administrative, il y a toujours place pour une capacité que vous recommandez.' He offers you the place of a vice-director."

Dmitry shook his head.

"I am obstinate, Elena Michaïlovna," he answered; "I do not lose heart easily, that's true, but if I do, I never return to the path I once left."

"Indeed!" she said, and her dark eyes flashed with some mysterious, unspoken words.

Did Dmitry understand this silent hint or not? Be this as it may, he thought it his duty to thank her for the pains she had taken on his account.

"You accuse me of ambition, I know," she went on, and her voice grew soft, and a great tenderness pervaded her whole being. "Perhaps you are right. Women, I see, ought not to be ambitious. I who have no family have given it up long ago."

She rose and went over to the open window.

"You won't upbraid me, I trust, for having trans-

ferred my ambition to you," she went on jestingly, and her eyes, after resting for one short moment upon his face, lost themselves in the deep darkness of the garden.

The perfumed night air filled the half-lit room. The soft fragrance of the blossoming lime trees pervaded the whole garden. She leant on the window-sill, giving herself up to the spell of the lovely night.

"It is only a waste of time, I fear," answered Dmitry, "if you devote yourself to my career; don't you think we could find a better mutual interest in our life than politics? I should prefer enjoying nature with you——"

"Let us try," she interrupted, with a bright smile; "let us read the stars together."

"Yes," he said readily, joining her at the open window, "it would be better than to dream of stars than of uniforms. Such a night! This is an enjoyment open to all, understood by everybody! Alas, Elena Michaïlovna, if it could be granted to us, for a short time at least,—for ever it would be impossible,—to wipe out of our lives all political, but especially all official, care! The excitement of our absurd social life, its far-off rumours, ought never to penetrate into the quietness of our steppe. How charming it would be then to live in this deep stillness!"

She shook her head laughingly.

"Oh, no! I should dislike such quiet, and so would you, for you are fond of movement and life.

As for this stillness," she pointed at the garden, "that's quite another thing. Of this you can't tire."

They were, in fact, surrounded by a perfect stillness the stillness of a country night. The sounds of the piano had died away, Jenny having gone upstairs, and even Elena felt a slight embarrassment at being left alone with a young man in the midst of this deep quiet of house and nature. They talked in half whispers, as if afraid of being overheard by the silent night; they stood so near to each other that their shoulders almost met. A strange giddiness overcame them; he felt her breath on his cheek, and at the same time a sort of oppressiveness, resembling weariness, yet intoxicating like wine, seized him. He did not listen to her words; they only awoke within him a great sense of tenderness, perfectly incompatible with their business-like tenour.

"Neither in her, nor in her words, is there any real strength," he thought; "but there is something else, which she does not express, but which we both understand, and which it is sweet and charming to listen to."

Suddenly she started up and left the window quickly. Dmitry gazed wonderingly at her.

"My head aches," she said, throwing herself on her couch; "it is this fragrant night air; it is too heavy-laden with perfume."

And a faint smile hovered round her lips.

"Don't you think, Dmitry," she asked, in a half

whisper, "that all is now exactly as it was in those by-gone days, when we used to meet in the house of your cousin at Moscow?"

Dmitry had been standing before her, vainly trying to find words to express his thoughts. Her words now broke the spell that seemed to tie his tongue.

"Yes," he exclaimed joyously; "I am so glad once more to find the old Elena again."

And he almost fancied that the last ten years of his life had been a dream, and had never really existed. Yet it was not the same as of old. *Now* a sensual passion for a beautiful woman made his blood course madly through his veins, *then* he had worshipped with a pure love at the feet of a proud and rigid girl; *now* her excessive beauty made him feel giddy, *then* he had only thought of the affinity of their souls. He hardly knew how he found himself at her feet, pouring out torrents of impassioned words. She listened silently to him, and her head dropped slowly on his shoulder. He threw both his arms round her waist, and folded her in his embrace. She did not draw back.

"Elena, Elena, you are mine—mine," he whispered, kissing her burning lips.

But suddenly it seemed to him as if the living woman he was holding in his arms had turned to stone. She did not try to free herself from his embrace; she only raised her head, fastening her eyes on his with an expression of ghastly fear. She had

turned ice-cold, and the passionate woman of a few minutes ago had ceased to exist.

"Elena, what's the matter?" he exclaimed, starting back, and his voice almost sounded wild.

She did not answer, her hands only dropped wearily on her lap.

"What has happened?" he again asked, staring at her.

Just as she was quietly giving herself up to his caresses, she had suddenly remembered that she had resolved the day before to realize the dream of her life and to marry Dmitry; was she not now endangering this hope, and would she not lose the fruit of her long perseverance, if she yielded to the present temptation? Calculation had become the ruling spirit of her life; she never lost her head; and even now, when passion had almost mastered her, she quickly recovered her self-possession. Elena did not belong to those women who surrender themselves unconsciously to their lover, forgetting the whole world around them. She awoke on the very verge of the abyss, and her strength sufficed to prevent her from sacrificing the aim which she had been cherishing and nursing so cautiously since she met Dmitry again.

But he had also recovered his presence of mind; he now saw clearly that this woman, with her strange self-possession, could never become dear to him, and a secret voice whispered to him that some passion, much stronger than love, ruled her soul. This was

sufficient to extinguish the last spark of his re-awakening passion.

Some moments passed in deep silence. Elena got up; he did not keep her back.

"Forgive me," he said, in a dull voice, trying to conquer his excitement.

Elena had now entirely recovered that self-possession which she hardly ever lost; she even succeeded in smiling.

"Can't we remain what we were formerly—friends?" she asked, holding out her hand to him, and laying a peculiar stress on the last word.

He hardly touched her fingers; a cold hand-shake would have seemed ridiculous to him after what had just passed between them.

"The past never fully returns, Elena Michaïlovna," he said, with a tinge of irony. "And now," he added, turning to go away, "I think it is time for me to return home; it is not far from eleven o'clock.

His heart throbbed wildly as he went downstairs and mounted his horse. He dropped the reins on the horse's neck, and rode slowly on.

Elena did not lie down for a long time; all the details of her conversation with Dmitry passed once more before her mental eyes. She felt satisfied with herself. The victory which she had won over her own heart had cost her a great deal, but she knew at least the extent of her power over Dmitry and herself. To this triumphant consciousness, however,

some regrets were added; a great victory is seldom won without tears. But she had remained true to herself, and had not sacrificed the future to a moment's joy. With these happy thoughts she dropped peacefully asleep. But she had forgotten the adage: "Faint heart never won fair lady."

## CHAPTER V.

A STARLIT, moonless night was spreading over the steppe. The air was so pure, the constellations shone so brightly, that the darkness seemed almost transparent. No sound was audible but the horse's hoofs clattering on the hard soil of the road, and the rare barking of a dog in some far-off village. Having reached the place where the road branched off from the oak copse, leading towards the Kurmiloffsky meadow, Dmitry turned his horse's head. He did not want to go directly home, being still unable to conquer the feeling of shame and unrest which he had carried away from Nikolsky. There was something in this feeling which smarted very deeply, something which told of a lie having been enacted between him and Elena. It seemed to him as if some sacrilege had been committed by them, as if some holy object had tumbled down and been broken. Yes, his burning words and her enigmatical coldness had been a living lie. He had taken a pure physical excitement for the voice of a true and sincere love, and she—she had crushed and conquered her love, while assuring him that she was still the old Elena,

and all this for the sake of some miserable calculation. Now he had guessed what this paltry, mean calculation had been: she had not known that in surrendering herself to him she would have bound him to her with indissoluble ties. She had thought that he—— But what sort of love would this have been, if one moment's joy would have sufficed to kill it for ever? Suddenly the image of Elena as a young and lovely girl rose before his eyes, and he clearly saw the difference between her past and her present feelings. He deeply regretted this lost image of her, and a sickening feeling of having said an eternal farewell to his whole past crept over him. Yes, she had deceived him just as he had deceived himself; it had only been an artificial returning of their old love.

A night-bird, noiselessly flapping its wing, flew across the road. Dmitry woke up. It must have been an hour since he had turned away from the highroad, for the Great Bear had already drawn near to the border of the horizon. The road now wound through low, crawling brushwood, no trace anywhere of a wood. He must have lost his way. He spurred his horse to reach a village as quickly as possible, but nowhere was a village perceptible. The brushwood had disappeared, and was succeeded by far-stretching fields. Not knowing the neighbourhood, Dmitry galloped on at random. The fields now ceased, and the road led over a meadow full of hillocks. He

walked his horse very carefully onward, trying to pierce the darkness to find the right path. "The Volga!" he suddenly cried.

The shores of the river were not very high, but excessively steep; the rugged path crept around a small cape, and the black mass of waters, throwing back the soft light of the twinkling stars, seemed to roll under his very feet. The river, he fancied, here made a curve; to the left the clayish shore formed a sort of promontory, which stood keenly out against the starry vault of the sky. Behind it all was swallowed up in darkness, but to the right the large expanse of water was overflooded with a silvery light, dying away in the far-off distance. The river was asleep as well as the shore; its even waters looked quite benumbed, only from time to time a soft wave splashed against the stones on the beach, or knocked lazily against the boats anchored near it. This was certainly not a curve of the river, as Dmitry had thought at first, but one of the numerous fisher settlements of this part of the country. Two large boats, with masts devoid of their sails, were resting there for the night. The river did not even shake them with its slumbering waves; a slight current of air sometimes stirred the flag; on board all was silent, except for the unintelligible murmurings of a man half asleep.

"I'll ask him whether he can tell me the name of this place, and how I am to get home," thought

Dmitry, and, taking the horse by the bridle, he approached the river on foot. The boats were faintly lit up by two lanterns, which threw reddish streaks on the water. One of them was empty, nothing but a great heap of linen and a fur lamb-coat being thrown on its bottom. On the other, eight fishermen, dressed only in their shirts, were lying about, some of them having put their kaftans under their heads, some over their knees. Near a young fellow who was continually muttering in his sleep, a very old man was sitting; he was smoking a short pipe and mending a sail. When Dmitry addressed him, he turned round without wondering that a man on horseback came in the middle of the night to ask his way. Russian peasants hardly ever wonder at anything, especially the old ones who have wandered about a great deal. He got up to go to Dmitry, with difficulty making his way through the many feet of his sleeping companions.

"How to get to Biälastolby?" he repeated, after a moment's reflection; "indeed, I don't know. We are strangers here, having only taken this place for a fortnight from the merchant Sevrugine. Do you happen to know him? But how to get to your place I cannot tell you."

And the old man fell a-thinking. He looked very old and decrepit, only his eyes sparkled in a youthful way, in the light of the lantern.

"How far is it from here to the town?" asked

Dmitry, fancying he might know the distance to the place which he had come from.

"About fifteen or twenty versts. This place is called the Volga Fishery."

"Twenty versts!" repeated Dmitry aghast; "but you say this place belongs to Sevrugine, so it is perhaps not far from Tshornaïa Khutora."

"Oh! now I remember," cried the old man, all of a sudden; "we have a man on board who knows all about this neighbourhood, being from here; he will show you the road. He! he! Father Pakhom," he called out, touching a man with his foot, "wake up; we want you here."

He was an old man, with a very quiet, trustworthy expression on his dry, beardless face. He looked excessively poor, being dressed in a torn shirt, old linen leggings, and vast shoes; a wallet was slung over his shoulder.

"Well, Father Pakhom, here is a barine who asks for his way to Tshornaïa Khutora; if you can, please take him there."

"I know, I know; how should I not?" he answered quietly, his eyes rivetted on the lantern, as if wanting to find there the solution of some riddle.

"A very virtuous old man," said the first fisherman, addressing Dmitry; "when we passed Khavalinsky yesterday, he dragged himself up to our boat, imploring us, for Christ's sake, to take him down the river. He came from Voronesh, he said, where he

had prayed before the saints' images; and will you believe it, batushka? he can read and write, and he has lots of books with him, wonderful books, out of which he reads to us."

"But if you are from our neighbourhood, Pakhom," said Dmitry, "why do you sleep here in this boat, and do not go home for the night?"

"No," answered Pakhom, with a shake of his head; "I'll take you to Tshornaïa Khutora, but I shan't go and see my family, because they are not on my way."

He walked out of the boat, and, without asking for any money, took hold of the bridle and led the horse onwards.

"Is it very far to Tshornaïa Khutora?" asked Dmitry.

"We shall be there in less than an hour," answered his guide, walking steadily on at his even pace.

"Well, tell me, my good fellow, if you have relations here, why don't you go and sleep with them?'

"I have no relations," he answered, after a short pause.

"Yet you are from this neighbourhood?"

"I am and I am not," was the mysterious answer of Pakhom.

"That is, I suppose, that you are without a passport."

Pakhom gazed at Dmitry with frightened eyes.

"Why do you say this to me, barine? Good

people never put such questions to me; they only feed me. I have been to St. Mitrofani; there I pleaded hard for the forgiveness of men's sins. Now I am going to the monastery at Irgis, where an old monk lives quite alone. God sent me to him. A revelation was vouchsafed to me. Who knows, perhaps I may gain something, one way or the other."

Pakhom was again silent, and Dmitry did not learn what revelation had been vouchsafed to him, nor why he wandered about from one monastery to the other.

"You were wrong to mention the passport," the old man again said; "I've got one for the next three years," he added, almost weeping.

Dmitry did his best to comfort him.

"I am not of the police," he said, laughing; "why should I want to do you any harm? You will pray for me, won't you?" And he drew a green paper from his pocket.

"You are very kind, barine," answered the old man, refusing to pocket the offered fee, "but I do not want your money. I have now been wandering about on the holy soil of Russia for more than two years, and have never hungered; keep it for some one who is poorer than I am."

"Well, you can read and write," Dmitry began again, wanting to get him to talk; "how can you go on living in this way, without having anything to do?"

"Nothing to do!" he repeated, shaking his head wonderingly; "but did I not tell you that I pray for other people's sins? A revelation was granted to me. 'Go, Pakhom, go and pray,' the voice said to me. So I went, and shall be going as long as my legs carry me. I can read and write; our barine had me taught at school. Afterwards I served in a manufactory at Moscow until the Emancipation came."

"And at Moscow you enjoyed your life thoroughly, I daresay?" asked Dmitry.

"Oh, barine, you have no idea how people live there! The master was very wicked, and never gave his workmen their money without quarrelling; the slightest fault was most severely punished. He had given me a book in which to write down his agreements with those who could neither read nor write. There were such lies in it that I told him to his face I would not do such wickedness. He drove me away, abusing me in the most awful way."

"When did this happen?"

"About ten years ago. I gathered all my worldly goods together, and went away to look for work elsewhere. Once I met a monk in a very, very old cassock, with a very severe face, who began to question me very closely. On hearing that I could read and write, he told me to use these great gifts in God's honour to teach His people. He blessed me before I set about my work, told me to wander through Russia, to go to all holy images, there to

pray for other people's sins, to forgive all injuries, and to defend the oppressed ones, after which he explained to me our Christian faith, our holy orthodox faith, such as Christ taught it here on earth."

Dmitry listened with great interest to these ravings of the old man. Pakhom was no longer afraid of him, and went on with his story.

"Since that time I have been wandering about from one holy place to the other. I have visited them all—Kiew, Solovka, and Nil Stobolensky. I only went twice to my own village. My brother had been made a soldier; now, of course, he is come home; but is he a head of the household himself? I don't know. They cried over me for having left my native village and being thus excluded from the division, and called me a fool for wandering about in this way.

"And the monk, did you never meet him again?"

"Yes, I met him once at Kiew. He gave me lots of books, holy books, telling me to distribute them among the poor and needy."

Dmitry had certain doubts about the holiness of these books.

"What is written in them?" he asked.

"It is said in them that Christ ordered the orthodox people to live in holiness, avoiding all sorts of temptations of the flesh. I have such a book with me. It is called, 'How to Recognise Serpents and Avoid Them.' Then it is said that Christ gave the whole world to the orthodox people, ordering them

to live in peace and concord; to rule the earth thus, that every one has his own work to do and none be left in sadness and want; and to pray before all holy images."

Pakhom was again silent. Dmitry did not question him any more; sad thoughts were filling his heart. It seemed to him as if a senseless wandering after an unknown aim, like that of the old man, was now taking place in Russia, as if mysterious ways were meeting and crossing one another, putting him in mind of the monk of Pakhom, and leading where to—to the abyss or to salvation?

"Here we are," said Pakhom, pointing at some dark spots half-way up the hill. "This is Tshornaïa Khutora, and that way leads directly towards the forest, so you do not want me any more. Are you from here, barine?"

Dmitry told him his name.

"Well, then, you have quite an easy way before you," answered the old man, doffing his cap. "Go straight on to the Feodovoi Apiary, and then right home to Biälastolby."

"Now I know my way quite well," interrupted Dmitry, and the tall figure of Pakhom, walking off towards the Volga, soon melted away in the distance. Dmitry put his horse to a canter, and rode off in the direction of the forest.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE Feodovoi Apiary was a little wooded ravine, at the bottom of which was a small pool of water, which looked dark and muddy, even in the brightest sunshine. Formerly there had been a dike and an apiary there, but the latter had disappeared long ago, and nothing remained now but the spring waters, which did not evaporate during summer. In spite of this, people had kept up its old name. It looked sad and dark, even on a fair day, and at night there blew a cold and damp air, as if out of a tomb.

The cock had already crowed twice when Nadia set out on her walk, the inmates of the house having gone to sleep rather late in the evening. She did not know herself how or when she took the resolution of going. Her doubts had suddenly vanished, and an unknown strength seemed to support her against her will. "To look a danger in the face is already to have conquered it," she thought, as she hurried on towards the hollow. She only trembled for her relations, never giving a thought to her own safety. She could not have explained to herself why

Neradovitch seemed to her endowed with such a mysterious power; but it was perhaps this mystery which acted upon her imagination and drew her unconsciously on to meet this man, whose very name evoked the saddest remembrances within her breast.

He had been waiting a whole hour for her.

"So you came, after all," he said, and there was a ring of confidence as well as of scoffing in his voice. "I was sure of it."

He stared hard at her, as if wishing to discover whether she had changed during the time they had not met. Nadia stopped before him, looking proud and cold, and without giving him her hand.

"I know that you have become a great lady, and that you live with one of the peers of the steppe," he began; "and indeed you look like a real duchess. Besides, you——"

Nadia waved her hand impatiently.

"I don't suppose you sent for me to listen only to these rhapsodies," she said sharply.

"Aïe! aïe! how angry we get, Nadeshda Sergeïevna!" he laughed aloud. "Don't be in such a hurry to know why I sent for you; we'll talk business over by-and-by. Well, and so you are enjoying life thoroughly! Such a life of luxury and idleness must be charming, indeed."

He was teasing her in order to provoke a sharp retort, which might betray her true disposition; but she conquered her anger, and kept the rebellious

words down which rose to her lips. She remembered that this man knew intimately some very near relations of hers, and she felt ashamed at not having asked after her sister and her husband.

"So you have not quite forgotten their existence?" He answered her inquiries mockingly. "Thank you, they are very well; till now, at least. I can even assure you that your sister, whom you always looked upon as a very weak and poor being, has given proofs of stoicism such as are rarely seen. Yes, you always scorned Alexandra Sergeïevna, I know, yet she did not weary of her work, nor exchange our humble life for one of enjoyment, in spite of her father's entreaties."

Nadia again swallowed the indignant answer which trembled on the tip of her tongue, for she wanted to hear some details about her sister's life.

"Personal danger there is not as yet," continued Neradovitch. "In Moscow we were once disturbed, but the police did their business very badly, only catching three of us, and none of the important ones. We separated for a few weeks, and then returned again to the old nest. During that time your sister often had not a crust of dry bread to eat. Afterwards she went to Kief as a daily labourer. This, of course, must appear perfectly ridiculous to you; it is so much easier to go and live with a rich aunt."

But now Nadia's patience was at an end.

"You forget," she cried passionately, "how you

treated me in Moscow, never trusting me with the slightest work. And when, after four months' patient waiting, I at last asked for work, what did you answer me?"

Neradovitch seemed delighted to have roused her as far as to get an answer out of her.

"How little you understand me, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he laughed; "am I such a Puritan that I want to shut you up in a monastery? Live just as you like; wear velvet and satin; I don't care. Fools alone mind the exterior of things. So much the better if our confederates live in palaces, provided they do not forget their friends amid the comfort and elegance of their luxurious lives."

"You really fancy I care for these outward enjoyments?" exclaimed Nadia. "How little you know me!"

She was beginning to defend herself, almost unconsciously. Neradovitch profited by this false move.

"So much the better, if I am mistaken. If you want work, I can give you something to do, if your convictions are the same as formerly."

Here Nadia straightened herself.

"What I considered as truth has not changed to me, and will never change," she answered. But in spite of the firmness of her tone, she felt the duplicity of her words, and a hot blush mounted to her brow.

"Well, prove it then, Nadia," he answered cordially. "You always wanted work; now you can be of great

help to us. What I ask is not so very difficult. I begged you to come here that I might explain it all to you, feeling quite sure of you. Forgive my sharp words. I trust you perfectly.

A slight rustle, very like some frightened murmurings, ran through the leaves of the aspen trees, which grew densely on the ground of the hollow. Neradovitch seized the young girl's hand, pressing it tenderly in both his. Then he let it fall again, and she stood before him like a lifeless being.

"What do you want of me?" she whispered, almost inaudibly. She again felt herself under the power of this man, who had ruled the first years of her life; unseen fetters seemed to weigh down and paralyse her will.

"First of all, let me tell you why I am here. It had long been evident to me that our whole way of working was a failure. Our distributing tracts, talking to the many factory men, is nothing but children's play; our disguising ourselves only makes us fall into the hands of the police. I have been long enough maintaining the rights of men and the universal Republic; soon we shall have to give up preaching those absurd theories."

"Then you do not believe in them yourself!" cried Nadia, aghast.

He laughed aloud.

"Believe! Of what use is my believing? Really, you must try and get rid of these romantic ideas;

they are only good for schoolboys, who are not to be won over in any other way. The people," he went on, getting more and more excited, "are the lever which is to crush our present rotten society; but a lever wants a fulcrum, and this fulcrum is not to be found in such liberal nonsense. The only thing that has any charm in the peasant's eye is the soil on which he lives and labours. Therefore we must teach him that the present master of the soil, the landed proprietor, has no right to it, that it belongs to him, the peasant, and that he ought to stand up for his right. This he will understand. To the devil with all the rest!"

"That is, you look upon our peasants as working brutes, whom you want to provide with better provender," said Nadia, to whom it suddenly occurred that Boroffsky had compared them to wild beasts. In both their eyes they were animals, nothing else.

Neradovitch hardly observed the impression which his words had made on the young girl.

"Our work," he went on, "is hard work, no ideal business. You won't find Arcadian shepherds among our people. Now listen to me: I have been told for certain that in these favoured parts of the country, thanks to the abundance of Communal land, the peasants have of late been complaining of the rise of the land prices. So I resolved to try my luck here, along with two or three others sympathising with me. Of course I know it will be long before a second

Pugatshoff appears. But never mind; let the revolt only raise its head in the one or other place; a candle for one kopeck, you know."

"Yes," cried Nadia indignantly, "what does it matter if a few peasants are taken into custody and packed off to Siberia?"

"It can't be helped," he said, with a shrug; "nothing can be obtained without sacrifice. I tell you this plan is ripe as few plans are. The seed is growing up. When once your Biälast——"

He stopped, staring hard at her with his burning eyes.

"What about Biälastolby?" asked Nadia, hardly able to hide her violent excitement.

He did not answer at once. His eyes seemed to want to search the most hidden recess of her mind; and again, just as four months ago at Moscow, a feeling rose within his breast that had nothing to do with the dry problem which had taken him to this part of the country, but he again met with the same proud and cold gleam that had kept him aloof at Moscow.

"In Biälastolby," he continued, "the peasants are more èxasperated than anywhere else; it is useless to explain this. You know why. The son of the parish priest, Vassili, gave me all the details long ago. I disguised myself as a peasant, came down here, and have been living here some time, without awakening the slightest suspicion.

"Where do you live?"

"With a solitary old man, somewhere here about. But never mind, I am only a bird of passage; if I want to confer with you, I shall always find the means of reaching you."

"And you really fancy I shall appear as often as it pleases you to call me?"

But even while saying this she felt that she was not yet entirely free.

"I told you that those who once belonged to us never recover their liberty entirely," he answered, with a tinge of irony in his voice. "Do you remember that evening when you pleaded so passionately for admittance?"

She did not answer, only bent down her head. Neradovitch crossed his arms on his breast. He seemed at this moment to grow and to expand before her eyes.

"You will appear whenever I order you to come," he said imperiously; "till now you have not got any task appointed to you; our work has been but a preparatory one, and it is impossible to fix the day when we are to begin in real earnest."

"What are you contriving, Neradovitch?" she asked uneasily.

He looked distrustingly at her.

"Do you really tremble for these Koretzkys? What have they done to deserve your gratitude—granted you their paltry hospitality for a few months?

Is this your readiness to go everywhere for us? At Moscow you claimed work, and now you doubt and hesitate."

A warm flush rose to her brow, indignation and shame struggled within her breast, but she remained silent. What could she say to him? Oh, if she could but have broken for ever with this hated man! Her conscience now spoke loudly, pointing clearly to the side of those whom she loathed!

"I can't allow this," he continued, in a softer and more propitiating voice; "you can't break the word you once gave me. What do I ask of you, after all? Only to be our faithful confederate in the enemy's camp—to repeat to me every word you hear in your aunt's house."

"That is, you want me to act the part of a spy, and thus reward her for her hospitality."

"'Spy!' what high words! don't be so fastidious! We don't care for these tragical ways, I assure you. We may have to use the red cock. I won't deny this. But to manslaughter we shan't recur, before——"

"And you think that, knowing this, I could go on living in the house of my aunt, whom you threaten with fire and sword? Knowing this, you think I should not warn her?"

This time her voice was so passionate, the revolt of all her most sacred feelings spoke so loudly, that Neradovitch could no longer entertain any doubt as to the trust he could put in her.

"It is too late to draw back, Nadeshda Sergeïevna." A threatening expression appeared on his face, though his voice sounded quiet and even. "Or does that feeling speak within you, which in a woman's heart deafens all other voices? Then of course you are lost to us. But then also your lover will be responsible to us for your change. If my suspicions are true——" He stopped. The faint noise of a galloping horse had reached his ear. "There is somebody passing near here from Tshornaïa Khutora. The pace at which the horse goes proves it is not a peasant, so I think it is safe for me to disappear. Good-bye, Nadeshda Sergeïevna. I advise you to reflect on what I have told you."

He hid himself behind a tree, stepping cautiously on the cracking, dry leaves of the forest path. The young girl remained rooted to her place, her brain quite dizzy. She raised her hand to her burning forehead, as if wanting to remember and clear her thoughts; but the tumult within her breast was too violent, she felt unequal to the task. She had come to her meeting with Neradovitch fully convinced of being able to defend her own independence, and of finding the key to his thoughts. And instead of this, what had happened? He had not unveiled a single plan of his, and had only told her that she was the slave of her freely given word. Nothing remained for her but to submit entirely to this loathed man, or to betray his plans to the Koretzkys.

She had no other choice. A feeling of perfect helplessness overcame her. Had she the right to sacrifice this man, who held all the threads of the movement in his hand, this man whom she had once trusted so implicitly, even if it were to save the Koretzkys, Dmitry himself?

Nadia suddenly shrieked aloud, for she saw Dmitry close to her. He had sharply stopped his horse.

"What, you here! at this hour of the night!" he cried wildly. "What are you doing here?" he inquired indignantly, as if he had the right to call her to account, at the same time stretching out his neck to catch the sound of some retreating steps, faintly audible on the soft moss. Springing from his horse, he drew near to her. The indignant, commanding tone of his voice did not wound her; she felt so awfully guilty towards him, and was ready to accept whatever reproaches he might think fit to heap on her.

"Answer me," he cried, catching her hand; "what are you doing here at three o'clock in the morning? Who was it whom I saw hiding there in the copse? Who has been here with you?"

She remained silent, only pressing her hands convulsively to her burning temples.

"I claim an answer from you," he cried passionately, in a broken voice. He hardly knew himself why such a whirlwind of passion shook him at the sight of the young girl standing silently before him,

just as she did not know why she looked upon him as the lawful judge of her guilt.

Hot, burning tears started into her eyes. The awful tension of her nerves after the events of the night, added to her feeling of utter helplessness, made her surrender entirely to Dmitry's protection or condemnation.

"Leave me. Don't ask; I can't say anything," she whispered, hiding her tear-stained face in her hands.

He felt dreadfully sorry for her; the unwonted sight of her tears moved him deeply.

"Nadia, my dear child," he said tenderly, "can't you trust me?"

"You! you! How could I?" And she wrung her hands in despair.

If it had been any other girl but Nadeshda Sergeïevna who had stood thus before him, he would have felt the strongest distrust towards her. But he knew Nadia and her lofty character much too well for that. She was truth and honesty itself; and if she had a secret, she need certainly not blush at it; nor was it shame which was depicted on her pale features, but fear, agonizing fear of some approaching evil.

"This man, he is the cause of your excitement, is he? He has some mysterious power over you, has he? Still you ought not to have come to him in the dead of night."

She was silent.

"Don't answer me if it troubles you; only give me a sign, if I am right. Don't you see how this uncertainty weighs on me?"

These words of Dmitry made her start violently. She had not even the right to clear herself of the distrust which he ought to feel. This was the worst of all.

"Think of me whatever you will, I can't clear myself in your eyes," she said, with an effort, trying to disengage the hand which he was holding, and turning to go away.

He kept her back.

"You don't understand me, Nadia," he said. "Whatever you do, I shall never distrust you. It is not in my power to do so."

A flash of joy lit up her face.

"Don't upbraid me, Dmitry, but trust me, if you can," she said quietly.

"Yes, I can," he cried eagerly, "for I know that your secret is but the result of your past life, of that bondage which you are unable to shake off entirely."

The name of Neradovitch, whom Boroffsky had mentioned in the morning, now suddenly flashed through his mind; he had heard his mother talk of him several times. "The man who fled just now can be nobody else," he thought, "therefore I must try and save her; but speedy help will be necessary."

"Yes, a bondage which I am unable to shake off entirely," she whispered in his ear.

"I understand those pretended obligations, which you look upon as binding; you dare not break openly with those people, but I shall free you from their power, even against your will."

She shook her head despondingly, yet her heart throbbed gladly at the thought that Dmitry might be able to find an issue out of the bewitched circle which closed upon her. He felt that it would not be wise to insist upon a confession just now; and why do it? He had already got the key to the enigma, and little by little he felt sure of rending the nets that held her a prisoner.

"Is it not time for us to go home, Nadia?" he asked, in a perfectly quiet voice. "You look so tired, I'll put you on my horse, I think; you are perfectly unable to walk home."

She allowed him to place her on the saddle before him, for did she not feel like a child in his strong hands?

"Do you feel comfortable?" he asked tenderly, straightening her skirts, and passing his arm round her waist.

She bent her head in acquiescence, and he put his horse to a quick gallop. Now that she had entirely submitted to his care, he looked upon her as a sweet and helpless child, whom he was destined to protect and to save. These feelings filled his heart with a joy quite different from that tumult of emotions in which he had left Nikolsky a few hours before. He

had forgotten all about his meeting with Elena; he only knew that he was holding a beloved being in his arms, and that this strange scene in the wood had drawn them much closer together than any usual meeting could have done, however much remained between them which had not yet been told. Towards east the sky was already whitening as they drew near home.

## CHAPTER VII.

PETER NICOLAIEVITCH had risen very early. The unceasing barking of the dogs, the buzz of the gnats round his bed and of the flies on the window-panes had disturbed his sleep. He thrust his feet into his embroidered slippers and wrapped himself in his dressing-gown. He felt thoroughly disgusted with country life.

A grey, dull morning was dawning over Biälastolby. In Russia such sudden changes in the weather often take place, even in July. He approached the window, uncertain whether to open it or not; for he dreaded catching cold above all. In the country he never knew how to get through the day, while in Petersburg, or in his datsha[1] on the islands, it was quite another thing, his ante-room being always full of petitioners. Though he often used to grumble at them, here he felt the want of them most sorely.

No one had stirred in the house as yet. He rang for his servant, washed himself, and ordered tea. While pouring it out, a fly fell into his cup,—only to

[1] Country house.

vex him, of course,—the same fly which had worried him in the night, without any doubt. He began loudly to abuse it, though he was quite alone in the room. Most fortunately at this moment his servant appeared, announcing that the steward from Nikolsky had come over on business.

Peter Nicolaïevitch drew the tassels of his dressing-gown tighter, and began to sip his tea with a very solemn face. He almost rejoiced at the steward's arrival; it looked a little like his usual official receptions.

"How do you do?" he said, in answer to Gondevsky's deep bow, holding out three fingers to him. "Elena Michaïlovna is not very satisfied with you, I think; you have not justified the trust I put in you."

"Your Excellency!" exclaimed Gondsevsky, giving to his figure the form of an interrogation point, "when I accepted the post you offered me, I expected to find an enlightened landed proprietor, capable of valuing your recommendation; instead of it, all my efforts to adopt the perfection of agricultural science——"

"I know, my dear fellow, that you are a great scholar," answered the General, already a little mollified; "therefore I sent you here. But you seem to have been guilty of some carelessness in your farming, and have not always watched over the interests of your mistress in your relations to the peasants."

Gondsevsky now straightened himself, his body taking the form of an exclamation sign.

"Your Excellency will excuse me if I made some concessions to the peasants when taking up my work here; times are very difficult now-a-days; circumspection is necessary."

"I heard something about a wood," interrupted Peter Nicolaïevitch, somewhat impatiently, and sipping his tea.

Gondsevsky now began to relate how all his best endeavours had been frustrated by Dmitry's interference.

"He is your nephew, I know, and therefore I always treated him with great respect; but you will easily understand how hard it is for an experienced steward to submit to a young man who has not the slightest idea of farming, and who is, moreover, of a hot and fiery temper."

"I sent the procuration to my nephew," said the General, in his soldierlike way, "and you ought not to allow yourself——"

"Your Excellency," cried Gondsevsky, the cringing expression of his face suddenly disappearing, though his tone remained soft and insinuating, "I am quite ready to give an account of all my doings. You may remember, perhaps, that I sent all the money I got, along with the accounts, to you; and if I am unable to give them over to Mr. Koretzky, it is only because I don't know whether

you will acknowledge the receipt of these sums or not."

The haughty expression of the General's face vanished; he remembered in time that he had spent a great part of his ward's money upon his own business, having been once in a momentary money embarrassment. He intended to repay these sums, and therefore disliked Gondsevsky's mentioning them.

"Yes, of course; Dmitry acted somewhat imprudently," he answered lightly; but he shrank from meeting the steward's eyes.

"The peasants were perfectly maddened at Mr. Koretzky destroying our agreement about the wood," continued Gondsevsky; "and I should not wonder if we were to have riots at Nikolsky during harvest-time."

Peter Nicolaïevitch had no time to answer: his sister-in-law came into the room to inquire after his health. She adhered steadily to those laws of courtesy which she looked upon as a part of hospitality.

"I shall drive over to Nikolsky to-day," said the General to the steward, as he dismissed him; "we can finish our business there."

Having finished dressing, the General went into the drawing-room, where Anna Grigorievna invariably took her tea in the morning.

"Well, my friend," he said, addressing Dmitry with

mock gravity, "I have heard pretty things about you from Gondsevsky."

"You mean, I suppose, the agreement about the felling of timber, which I did not allow him to conclude?" said Dmitry indifferently.

"Now, that's no joke, to destroy an agreement signed by both parties; to do yourself justice in this way is rather odd. Government wants to better the peasants' position, wishes instruction and enlightenment to be spread about, proclaims the necessity of establishing new laws,—and you fly in the face of these very laws, in order to deprive the peasants of the necessary quantity of timber, which they can't possibly do without. Well, if we should have riots in the neighbourhood, I wash my hands of them."

Peter Nicolaïevitch went on talking in a tedious and diffuse way, without making the slightest impression on his hearers. Volodia swung indifferently to and fro on his chair, revolving in his mind whether he ought not to profit by this cloudy day to get a ride with Jenny. It is probable that the General would have talked in quite a different way if he had had to farm an estate himself. It is true he had acquired three thousand deciatines in the Government of Ufimsky from the Bashkir land; and this was, perhaps, the most substantial result of the activity of the commission, which had been instituted for the amelioration of the Bashkir's existence, and of which Peter Nicolaïevitch was the president. But he had

hastened to give these three thousand deciatines in lease to some great Jewish contractor.

"When we get to Nikolsky, uncle, I shall easily convince you of Gondsevsky's dishonesty," answered Dmitry.

Terenty now came into the room to announce that the volost elder, whom the barine had sent for in the morning, had arrived from Tshornaïa Khutora.

When Dmitry returned home from his ride in the night, he had not seen any one in the courtyard. The whole house had been buried in darkness, and no one, so it seemed at least, had seen Nadia. He had led his horse himself into the stable, and the groom had hardly moved in his sleep. Dmitry did not lie down at all; sitting down near the window, he remained there till the rays of the morning sun gilded the horizon. The feeling which filled his heart did not promise him much joy for the future; like the sun on this greyish day, it was surrounded by clouds. But not for a single moment did he doubt Nadia. The more he reflected on their nocturnal meeting, the better did he understand all. She trembled before that man, whose name she did not even dare to pronounce; she feared for the Koretzkys' safety, not for her own. But, viewed in the broad daylight, all these apprehensions of hers seemed senseless, and vanished like spectres. How could this man hurt her? Keep her in continual dread through some imaginary responsibilty? This he

would certainly not allow; though no real danger threatened her, he would take severe measures to prevent any one from approaching her. With this intention he sent for the volost elder, named Prokofij Artemi.

He went down to the office, where he found him awaiting his arrival. He was a tall, elderly peasant with regular features, who tried to look as dignified as possible. The cross on his breast had transfigured him. Ten years ago he had been a simple coachman.

Dmitry told him in a few words that suspicious people had been seen in the district, and that the authorities ought to have an open eye upon all persons they did not know. "Some of them," he concluded, "are disguised as peasants. Well, you will do you utmost, I trust."

"Don't be uneasy," answered the elder, with a self-satisfied air, "I have already given very severe orders to the starosts; and as for me, this token on my breast——"

"I expect proclamations and false ukases to be distributed."

The elder smiled.

"Don't worry on this account, Dmitry Alexandrovitch; we keep a sharp look out on these Nihilists. Our orders are secret and very severe. At Dievitch Slovoda we discovered a proclamation announcing a second Emancipation. Thus it was I got this dis-

tinction here, and now the whole district respects me on account of it."

"Do they talk a great deal about this second Emancipation?"

"Yes and no, your nobility. Before *me* they dare not, for I always tell them that having already granted one, the Czar does not dream of granting a second one; yet I hear they believe in it. It is very difficult to get such nonsense out of their heads;" and the elder sighed deeply.

On leaving the volost dignitary, Dmitry walked out into the fields. He was to decide when they were to begin with the getting in of the rye, and when to prepare the thrashing barn.

Nadia in the meantime had not yet made her appearance in the drawing-room. She had passed a sleepless night, and felt such an utter prostration, that she was unable to rise at the usual hour.

"Volodia, go and look for Nadia," said Anna Grigorievna, a little ruffled; "I told her to be here at eleven o'clock to make tea, and she is not yet here."

Volodia was glad of a pretext to get away, but he did not go up to Nadia's room. It was no great misfortune, he thought, if his mother had to wait a little. There was so much personal nonsense in Volodia's head this morning, that the rest of the world retreated to the background. A long row of passionate remembrances of Nikolsky whirled through his brain.

To these were now added new prospects of an enticing activity. That which had seemed perfectly impossible when Jenny first mentioned it, now lured him on as a living reality, and he already saw himself as marshal of noblesse, living in this very Biälastolby with his charming young wife. No wonder, then, that he had forgotten all about his meeting with Neradovitch in the post-house, and the mysterious letter which he had confided to him. He did not attach any great importance to the apparition of this well-known demagogue in the neighbourhood, though he had, of course, some faint idea of what would happen if the revolt raised its head.

He had hardly left the drawing-room before Nadia appeared. She looked almost ghastly, all colour having left her face, and her large eyes burning with a feverish glow. In former days Anna Grigorievna would have inquired most tenderly after her health on seeing her pale and weary face, but now she only asked her very dryly if she thought the whole house was to wait for her. Nadia refused to have any tea.

"I have asked you so very often to try and adopt more regular habits," said her aunt, ringing the bell. She had been revolving in her mind whether she ought to mention to her what Volodia had said the evening before; but she had resolved to wait until her own observations had proved the truth of her son's conjectures. She knew very well that if she wounded Nadia's feelings she would not spend an-

other night under her roof, and she pitied the poor orphan too much to thrust her out of her warm nest into the wide world. Her self-possession, however, was not strong enough to prevent her betraying the anger which Volodia's words had provoked within her breast.

A deep silence reigned in the room. Peter Nicolaïevitch was reading a morning paper, but the impatient way in which he twirled and twisted it about looked like a mute reproach to the young girl. The long knitting needles in Anna Grigorievna's hands trembled, as if she was worrying about something.

Suddenly Peter Nicolaïevitch put his paper aside, and turning towards Nadia with a mocking twinkle said,—

"Please tell me, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, where you went yesterday evening at twelve o'clock, when I saw you go down into the garden? Your light dress fluttered past my window."

"My head ached, so I took a turn in the garden."

"And it seemed to be very late when your steps again resounded on the staircase. The dogs prevented my sleeping the whole night. Was it very late when you returned from your walk?"

"Perhaps it was," she answered coldly. Her voice trembled to such a degree that her aunt thought fit to interfere.

"Come with me to my morning-room," she said,

putting away her knitting; "I want to talk to you."

She did not mention the nocturnal walk, at which the General had hinted, thinking she had not the right to control Nadia's personal liberty in this way.

"Now tell me quite frankly what took place between you and Boroffsky yesterday," she asked, in a tone she tried vainly to steady; "did you really refuse him?"

"I did. I won't marry a man I do not love."

"Why did you refuse to answer me yesterday evening? Did you perhaps fancy it was no business of mine?"

"I felt unequal to talk this matter over with you yesterday, dear aunt."

"Unequal! Can't you trust me? Had you no other secret motive for acting thus?"

"I told you already, auntie, that I do not love this man," interrupted Nadia, unable to conquer her excitement; "I had no other reason."

Anna Grigorievna, feeling that her self-possession would forsake her if she did not break off the conversation, pretented some household duty, and left the room. Nadia went upstairs. She had guessed the hidden meaning of her aunt's words. Her quick ear had detected the cold ring in her voice, and she knew what this coldness signified. A few days ago she had thought of leaving Biälastolby; but where was she to go to? But this did not matter so very much,

she was accustomed to a roving life; and the deeper the feeling which bound her to the Koretzkys, the quicker she ought to go away. Even if Dmitry had loved her,—but no, he never thought of her,—she would never have consented to become his wife against his mother's will; the idea of entering clandestinely into a family was odious to her; and she would have found resolution enough in her heart to wrench herself away from them, and leave their house. But now this had become impossible. Some unknown danger was threatening them. She would stay and protect them, for she alone would be able to penetrate Neradovitch's hidden thoughts. Without knowing it herself, she had already left her neutral position between her old and new friends, and was siding with the latter; but could it be otherwise?

The first thing to do was to have an interview with Dmitry. Though she could not tell him all, she would find the means of wrenching the weapons out of the enemy's hands; she would work upon the peasants' minds, and try to pacify them. Dmitry would help her, and they would have nothing to fear from Neradovitch. For two whole hours she waited in an agony of expectation to see him return, and at last resolved to go and look for him in the fields.

## CHAPTER VIII.

DMITRY was returning home accompanied by the starost Jacob. On passing the thrashing-barn, they looked in, and found the machine out of order. This had evidently been done on purpose, for it had been in perfect order four weeks ago. Dmitry gave Jacob a very severe scolding, which did not seem to move him at all, for he answered in his usual lazy way, obstinately looking down,—

"It will be very easy to have it repaired, the damage is so very small. Who knows, moreover, who had it unscrewed?"

Dmitry began to think that Jacob knew more about the matter than he liked to confess. He looked searchingly at him.

"Listen to me," he said gravely, as they left the barn; "I admit of no jests."

"If you are dissatisfied with me, why don't you discharge me?"

"Please to send to town immediately to get a machinist down; don't lose any time."

"There is one here in the neighbourhood who works at the president's; or, still better, there's another one at Nikolsky, named Efimo, a countryman

of mine, who came from town to-day. We might have him."

"Well, you can take him; still, we had better have a real machinist."

On seeing Nadia coming towards him, Dmitry at once left Jacob.

"You are worried," she said, on perceiving his knitted brow and the angry flash of his eyes.

"There has been foul play here," he answered, telling her of the thrashing machine; "it worries me because it must have been done by some of our own people. However, I shall try and get at the bottom of the conspiracy."

"A conspiracy never takes place without a cause," she said, looking straight into his eyes to see whether he suspected her.

"Oh, I know the cause. There is somebody inciting the peasants against me to spoil my farming."

"You exasperated the peasants against you yourself."

"No peasant did this; he will fell the timber in our woods, or burn down our harvest, but such an abject act of vengeance is not at all in the line of a Russian peasant. Besides, when I told them to make ready for the getting in of corn they almost refused. I saw they were devising something, put into their heads by—— But why do I tell you all this, Nadia?" he suddenly broke off; "you know it so much better than I do."

A hot flush mounted to her brow, and her eyes flashed angrily. Dmitry felt how offensive his words were, but it was too late to take them back.

"I have come hither to talk all these matters over with you," she said; "perhaps I could give you some good advice."

Dmitry gazed at her in silent wonder.

"Yes, advice, however strange it may seem to you," she said, and her clear, truthful eyes looked into his. "Whatever is devised against you can only be done through the peasants; make your peace with them, and all danger is averted."

"Oh, as for danger, I don't believe in it. There may be unpleasantness, damage, but these I do not fear, you know."

"No, Dmitry," she said, shaking her head, "there you are mistaken. There may be danger; and then think of your mother; a sudden fright might hurt her. It is still possible to avoid an explosion, but it can only be done by concessions."

Dmitry stopped short; a strong distrust was visible in his face.

"*You* give me such advice! you, Nadia, who trembled yesterday at the mere idea of betraying the ringleader of all these disorders!"

"If you can't understand the feeling which prompts me to talk in this way, I won't say another word," she said, in a whisper, "for, alas! I can't entirely justify myself."

"Nadia," he exclaimed wildly, "when will all these mysteries cease? Confidence must be entirely given, or——"

She bowed her head and was silent.

"Promise me, at least, that when all these difficulties will be over you will trust me fully and freely. If you only knew how blindly I would believe all that you tell me——"

The answer which he read in her eyes must have been according to his wishes, for he went on without insisting,—

"All will be settled, and very quickly too. I knew long ago that we should have to make some concessions, for we have always watched jealously over our lawful rights—that is, those moral obligations to do all that is in our power to raise and quiet those poor degraded beings."

Nadia's face brightened; she pressed his hand warmly.

"Now I am obliged to leave you, and go and see my mother."

Dmitry found her among her accounts. He told her all the events of the morning.

"Jacob wanted to be discharged, but I only gave him a hearty scolding."

This was, however, not according to Anna Grigorievna's ideas. She believed in Jacob, who had lived four whole years at Biälastolby. He had come there in capacity of a carpenter, after having lived

many years at Moscow. Anna Grigorievna had been much taken with him, and admired his cleverness and intelligence. She now stoutly refused to believe that he was in league with the Nihilists, for he seldom gave way to the peasants, and required a much greater amount of work of them than is usually done in Russia.

"I don't like his intimacy with Vassili, the son of the parish priest," answered Dmitry. "This man ought to have been extirpated long ago as a filthy weed."

With this last observation his mother agreed. Ever since Boroffsky had mentioned his intimacy with the young man who had been arrested at Slatursky she had disliked Vassili, and had even talked to his father about him. He had, however, only shrugged his shoulders and made a laughing observation.

Dmitry did not cease to sue for the discharge of Jacob, so she gave way at last.

"But this is not all," said Dmitry. "If you really want to prevent riots from breaking out here on the estate, we must make our peace with the peasants."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed fiercely; "and why so, please?"

"You refused twice to do it, but now it has become unavoidable. In five days it is harvest-time. I give you my word of honour that they won't begin if you do not give way about the division."

"And you want *me* to give way!" she exclaimed,

in a trembling voice. "How shall I ever manage them afterwards? It is just as if you were taking off the harness before beginning to plough."

"It is impossible always to act up to fixed rules. There are cases where it might be dangerous to yield, though perhaps more humiliating than dangerous. But this is quite another thing. We don't yield because we have never been threatened."

"But what would you have me do?" she asked, after a moment's silence.

"Well, this is my plan. The peasants rent the land from year to year at seven rubles a deciatine; now, I intend to propose to them to take 750 deciatines for fifteen years at five rubles. The chief thing for them is not the money they would have to pay less; but, being lords of the land for fifteen years, they would feel more like proprietors, and would probably work much harder. The man who now rents two or three deciatines for one year is never sure of getting the same lot the next year, and this uncertainty must influence his way of farming, I fancy."

"I wonder where you got this sudden tenderness for the peasants," said Anna Grigorievna, looking searchingly at her son. "Have you not been listening too intently to Nadia's ravings?"

Dmitry made a violent effort to keep back the answer which was on the tip of his tongue.

"I don't see why you mix Nadia up in this affair, he said coldly, with a frown.

"Because I think it is necessary to open your eyes on her account," she exclaimed, unable to master her excitement any longer. "Do you know that she has been out-of-doors the whole night?"

"I suppose I do, as we returned together," he said coldly; "we met on my way back from Nikolsky."

"You were with her! Oh, that's another thing," she answered hesitatingly. Wonder and indignation were audible in her voice, though she tried to speak in a mocking tone.

"A good work ought never to be left unfinished," said Dmitry quietly. "When you adopted Nadia, you took upon you certain duties which you can't nor won't throw off now, I daresay."

"No; he can't be in love with her," thought Anna Grigorievna, "or he would not speak so coldly."

"Elena Michaïlovna has sent over a messenger with this note," said Terenty, presenting a letter on a silver tray.

Having perused it, he gave it to his mother, who read it aloud:—

"Your uncle is an awful man! He has been delivering a lecture to me upon agronomy, and harps upon a wood which belongs by right to the peasants. I don't know what he means. If you don't want me to suffer from headache to-morrow, do come to my relief, and dine with us here, and thus save me from

the obligation of listening to your uncle's wise speeches, and of keeping the horrid Pole in my service.

"Faithfully yours,

"ELENA MICHAÏLOVNA."

"Just as if last evening had never existed!" he thought, after having listened to its contents.

"Well, what do you think of doing?"

"I'll go, of course," he answered, ordering Terenty at the same time to have his horse saddled quickly; "having once taken the management of Nikolsky upon me, I must do it thoroughly."

Anna Grigorievna gazed wonderingly at her son.

"No," she thought, "he could not dine quietly with Elena and talk business to her if——"

And she almost fancied her alarm to have been ridiculous.

"But please explain to me, before you leave me, why you defend the interests of the mistress of Nikolsky against her peasants, while here you do just the contrary?"

"Nikolsky does not belong to us; that's the whole difference."

Anna Grigorievna looked pensive. The joy which filled her breast as she convinced herself that her suspicions had been wrong made her soft and yielding.

"Well, do just as you like," she said suddenly; "but if things turn out a mistake, you will have no one to upbraid but yourself."

## CHAPTER IX.

ELENA did not care for the management of Nikolsky, but the whole personality of Gondsevsky, his cringing ways, his mode of speaking,—all was perfectly odious to her. When Peter Nicolaïevitch showed himself ready to uphold the steward, she was hardly able to conceal her anger at his uncalled-for interference. She had always disliked this friend of her husband's, as he put her in mind of the offence which Ordinzoff had done her on appointing him joint trustee to her. But on this day his visit was particularly loathsome to her. Her nerves were unstrung after the events of the preceding night, and she felt so excited that the high-pitched tones of Peter Nicolaïevitch's voice made her start and tremble.

Dmitry found her on the large terrace overlooking the courtyard. The weather had brightened a little. Jenny was reclining against the parapet, her whole attention absorbed by Jack, who lay lazily stretched out at the foot of the stairs, while she listened absently to her cousin's words.

"Come to my help, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," ex-

claimed Elena, with studied gaiety; "I do not understand a word of what your uncle has been saying to me for two whole hours." And she repeated quickly all his arguments, as if wishing to get rid of business, in order to pass to more interesting questions; but Dmitry did not or would not understand this: he listened to her with all the attention of a real man of business.

"I shall be delighted to take all this upon me," he answered. "We can go over the accounts now, my uncle and I, and then go and have a look at the farm. It will be a very easy matter to convince him of the steward's dishonesty."

Saying this, Dmitry went up to Jenny. Peter Nicolaïevitch frowned on hearing what amount of business was expected of him, and Elena was struck with the change that had taken place in Dmitry during the few hours she had not seen him. It was as if an abyss had opened between them, separating them for ever from the sweet memories of the past.

"Have you seen your brother to-day?" asked Jenny of Dmitry. "Did he not say anything to you?"

"Nothing in particular, I think; we only met for a short moment."

Boris Sergeïevitch greeted Dmitry very dryly, and left the terrace quickly. Jenny's eyes deepened and darkened, as if she had only been waiting for her cousin to leave her to say something very important

to Dmitry. She wanted to tell him that Volodia had come and proposed a ride to her, which had been prohibited by Elena under the most futile pretext, as if Boris had succeeded in opening her eyes to the danger of these rides. Volodia had looked very offended, and returned home before dinner.

"Do you know," asked Jenny, dropping her voice, "that Boroffsky proposed to Nadia yesterday, and was refused by her?"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dmitry, with a flush of joy.

"Your brother told me so, and I knew that you would be very glad," she said archly. "Oh! I should be so happy if——"

"So should I if——"

And his eyes spoke so clearly that Jenny flushed like a peony.

"Chut!" she said, "they are listening to us!"

"Eugenia Alexandrovna, shall we be allies?"

Dmitry clasped her small hand, and an unknown rush of joy swept over his heart. The approach of Boris interrupted their conversation.

"Shall we have a ride, cousin?" he asked. "I'll order your horse to be saddled."

"No, no, thank you; there is something amiss with my saddle," she said; and then suddenly remembering that it had been in perfect order an hour ago, she added, "It is going to rain." But conscious of having told an awful lie, she hurried away and hid herself until dinner-time.

"Well, uncle," said Dmitry, "let us be off now."

"I forgot to tell you, Elena Michaïlovna," said Peter Nicolaïevitch, "that Gondsevsky has hired a new machinist, a most remarkable person—quite a self-made man; he explained the whole steam-engine to me, the piston, cylinder, screw—in a word, a real genius."

But Elena did not care to listen to the praises of the machinist; her beautiful eyes were fixed on some far-off, unknown point, as if hoping to find there the answer to the questions which tortured her. She remained lost in her thoughts, even after the General had left her with Dmitry, perfectly unconscious of Boris' presence. The young Count had a great talent for observation, and he had remarked the strange tension in his cousin's movements and voice. He knew that in this quiet woman, transparent like a mountain lake in summer weather,—thus he liked to talk of her,—a storm was raging, which was ready to burst forth at a moment's notice.

Peter Nicolaïevitch had already wiped his damp brow more than once while looking over the long row of ciphers which Dmitry forced upon his attention. They did not leave the slightest doubt of the steward's dishonesty, and when they left the bills to look at the farm, things were still worse. The fields were neglected, the buildings going to ruin, the roofs of the warehouses leaked, and no machine was fit to be used. Gondsevsky had not expected the General

till the month of August, and had never thought he would inspect the farm.

The new machinist was at work when they entered the barn. He explained to Dmitry that there was hardly anything to be mended at the engine.

"Then you might perhaps be able to come over to Biälastolby the day after to-morrow?" said Dmitry.

The machinist consented, his small eyes twinkling with a wicked glare.

Dmitry did not observe it, not having looked at him. He had not the slightest idea that this man in the short, grey jacket was the same Neradovitch whom he had missed seeing in the forest the evening before. He managed his tools with great dexterity, and his hands were just as coarse and greasy as those of every other workman.

"What a clever man!" exclaimed Peter Nicolaïevitch, following his movements with admiring eyes. "Do tell me, my dear fellow, are you from here?"

"I am Efime Petroff, a peasant deficient in arable land from Chvalinsky," answered Neradovitch, without moving.

"Where did you learn your art?"

"This is no art, your nobility. I was in a manufactory where we were taught by Germans; but this is very ordinary work indeed."

"Yet it must be rather difficult to construct such a locomotive."

"It is no locomotive, but a locomobile, uncle," said

Dmitry; "but now come along, we have still much to inspect. And you, my dear fellow," he continued, addressing the machinist, "be sure to be at Biälastolby the day after to-morrow."

Neradovitch bent his head silently. When he talked with the old General it amused him to act the part of a man quailing before his high rank, but when he heard the commanding tone of Dmitry, a sudden wrath rose in his heart against the barine, in whom he dimly suspected his greatest enemy.

Peter Nicolaïevitch felt weary and exhausted. The money sums whirled through his brain; the questions about thrashing-machines, buildings, and cattle, appeared as enigmatical to him as the A B C to children. He had, moreover, a very disagreeable piece of business to transact. After all he had heard and seen to-day, nothing remained but to discharge Gondsevsky.

With evident signs of confusion he told the Pole to return the procuration he had given him, and thus to put an end to his services at Nikolsky, promising, however, to recommend him warmly to his friends, after which he shook hands with him, and looked expressively into his eyes. But every trace of servility had disappeared from the Pole's face; he straightened himself, and if he had had moustaches would have twirled them.

"Just as you please, your Excellency," he answered, with cold dignity, "but I can't return my procuration

before having made up all the accounts of the estate. Therefore I must ask you to pay me back the money I handed over to you, as well as the damage occasioned by my sudden discharge."

Large drops of perspiration stood on the General's brow. He murmured something inaudibly.

"That's nonsense, my dear fellow," answered Dmitry; "your procuration will be destroyed if you don't return it; as for the estate, *I* take possession of it."

Saying this, Dmitry led his uncle away.

When they returned home, the company had already assembled for dinner, but Dmitry refused to stay, under the plea of having too much to do at home. He promised to return on the following morning, to conclude the business with Gondsevsky, but his manner while giving this promise was cold and distant, and Elena observed a strange, unwonted ring in his voice. She gave him a perplexed look, as if wondering at their friendship having taken such a fatal, unexpected turn.

"You are satisfied with me, I hope," he said gaily, as he took leave of her; "please forgive me for not being able to stay any longer."

She gave him her hand in silence. It was as cold as ice.

## CHAPTER X.

THE golden fruits of the field were beginning to whiten, and to get the light yellowish tint of the perfectly ripe corn. The weather remained clear. It is true, towards midday greyish clouds, with sharp, white borders, were seen gathering in the sky; but towards evening they vanished, and only faint sounds from far-off thunder were heard in the direction where they had been. In spite of the July heat, the air was not close. Light winds blew over the steppe; the calm, rich abundance of a black earth summer reigned everywhere. But the silent forest, where no bird's song was audible any longer, the leaves of the trees, which had begun to take the rich autumnal tints, and the moss crackling dryly under the feet, were evident tokens that summer was on the wane. The unavoidable decay of nature was a forerunner of the approaching autumn.

At Biälastolby they were to begin the harvest on the following day. The July morning was sparkling in all its quiet beauty; the light blue sky seemed almost transparent, and the morning dew-drops still glittered on the grass and leaves. Nadia wished to

have a last look at the silent fields, before they would be invaded by the labourers on the following day. She had of late taken to lonely walks, avoiding her best friends as much as possible. She felt guilty in their sight; but more than all she fled before Dmitry. Since their meeting at the pasture, a strange embarrassment, much akin to shame, had taken possession of her. Five days had elapsed since that evening, and she always fancied she read reproaches in his eyes. He almost seemed to avoid her; and, strange to say, though she herself did her best not to meet him, yet his evident avoidance of her hurt her deeply. He was much taken up with the management of Nikolsky, though Elena did not show the slightest gratitude for all his pains; he adhered strictly to the part of steward, which he had taken up himself, as if the evening on which Elena had almost betrayed her whole past for his sake had never existed. Oh! how bitterly did she upbraid herself for having trusted too easily to the reawakening of his love for her. But even while crying over these lost delusions, an inward voice told her that it was her own fault if things had gone wrong. Even conscience has its official language.

Nadia, avoiding the dike and the village, passed out upon the highroad. She was suddenly arrested by the tinkling noise of bells: a troïka was driving quickly down the slope, and stopped opposite her.

"I am very glad that the business with the

peasants is settled," cried Dmitry, down from the carriage to Nadia, who had drawn near to him; "nothing remains now but to fix the conditions and trace out the land-mark. I owe this happy result partly to your advice."

But Nadia did not enter into his high spirits.

"Are you going into town?" she asked.

"Yes; I am going to hire labourers for Nikolsky, for I am Elena's steward now, do you know?" he said, laughing, his face breathing that satisfaction which is always the result of hard work.

But Nadia's face remained overcast.

"You have had a great deal of business on your hands of late," she said, only in order to say something.

"And you can't imagine how I enjoy it. Everything moves according to my own will; and I feel that I shall succeed. I only call that living when every new step brings one nearer and nearer to the proposed aim. Do you know, I have not been near my laboratory for a whole week?"

Nadia did not answer.

"Well, I must say goodbye now," he said, shaking hands with her. "I am rather in a hurry. Go on," he cried to the coachman.

The three horses started at a rapid pace, and the tarantass soon disappeared in a cloud of dust. Nadia wandered listlessly on towards the ridge. Though she had done her utmost to bring Dmitry

to conclude this arrangement with the peasants, she did not feel the same exultation which pervaded him. This was very strange, for she was also endowed with a strong will and high spirits, and Dmitry had risen in her esteem, because he went straight on towards his aim, avoiding neither difficulties nor work.

"Can it be that he works so hard, both here and at Nikolsky, only to please Elena?" she thought; and then stopped, for the sinking of her heart told her that in this busy life of his there was no place for her.

During their nocturnal ride there had been one moment when she had faintly hoped to see him turn to her with more than brotherly love; but it had been very transient. She knew now that he only felt pity for her and her sad lot in life. Oh! if she could but conquer all the difficulties of his position, stave off every danger from his beloved head, with what joy would she consent never to see him again!

"Nadeshda Sergeïevna! where are you going?" said a voice behind her.

She turned quickly round, and saw Vassili with Brushkoff behind her. They were carrying some heavy instruments in their hands.

"Are you going to the ridge, Alexander Formitsch?" asked Nadia.

"Of course. In summer a schoolmaster must do something besides pocketing his fees. By the bye, it seems it was you who advised the barine to make his peace with the peasants."

These words, as well as the tone in which they were pronounced, sounded unpleasantly in Nadia's ears.

"This would have been done also without my interference, I daresay," she answered curtly. "But you rejoice at the result, which is so very favourable to the peasants, I suppose?"

"What awful nonsense is this! *I* rejoice, who have been doing my best, along with Father Sosima, to make the peasants revolt against Mr. Koretzky; that is, against a man who possesses three times as much land by himself as the two hundred peasants do taken all together; and now you come and spoil all our work. Fortunately the business is not yet quite spoiled—the land is not yet distributed."

"Vassili Sosimitch," cried the young girl, in an almost beseeching tone, "you are not going to incite the peasants again? They are fond of listening to you, I know. You were born and bred here in the village; you understand what responsibility you assume if——"

"What is this, Nadeshda Sergeïevna?" interrupted Brushkoff; "what are you doing?"

But Nadia did not listen to him. She went on to beseech Vassili to remember how often he had told her himself that it would be necessary to do something to quiet the peasants. The young man was gnawing his moustache silently.

"You have fully passed into the enemy's camp, it

seems," said Brushkoff to Nadia. Then addressing Vassili: "Come along; let us make haste, they are waiting for us. Don't accompany us, please, Nadia Sergeïevna; this is no lady's work. Good-bye, and don't be angry if we leave you."

And, lifting his cap, he hurried his comrade on towards the place where the peasants were gathered together.

## CHAPTER XI.

NERADOVITCH was in no hurry to begin his work at Biälastolby. He had been mending the steam-boiler for three whole days, and had sent word to Dmitry that he should be obliged to work at it for another week. He found it very convenient to live thus in the very heart of the hostile camp, going to and fro under a plausible pretext, spending the night now at the manor-house, now in a peasant's isba. He avoided meeting Volodia and Nadia, and the others never gave a thought to the man who was working among them under the name of Efime Petroff. Dmitry called him a clever workman, and wanted him to take the surveyance of the boiler during thrashing time, the more so as the other machinist was not to be had.

About the time when Nadia met Dmitry on the highroad, Neradovitch was hurrying through the main street of the village towards the school-house. The day before the harvest was always an idle day, and being, moreover, a Sunday, there were several groups of men standing about the street doing nothing.

"Why are you here?" asked Neradovitch, as if quite unconscious of what was going on.

"We have been told that the barine has yielded us the land for fifteen years at five rubles a deciatine," said one of men.

"Well, your barine is a cunning man, for in a year or two the Czar will give a second Emancipation, and then all land will be divided equally between all men. It is quite true; I heard it myself in town just now."

In the meantime others had joined them, among them some of the oldest householders.

"Is it quite true what you say there, batuskha?" asked a very quiet-looking man, though he belonged to the worst of rioters in the village, "or is it some invention of your own? I have heard a great deal about this second Emancipation, but it seems a very long time coming."

"You ought to believe me," said Neradovitch, gazing at the distrustful faces of the peasants, "for if you bind yourselves for fifteen years, it will be too late, and you might regret it. But then, after all, it is your business, not mine."

And he walked quickly off towards the ridge.

"Well, if it be so, we should be fools to bind ourselves," said a voice in the crowd.

"What is signed is signed; we must stick to it," said one of the more peaceful men. And they all followed Neradovitch on to the ridge.

Some hours later Brushkoff was sitting in his room at his turning lathe, finishing a round wooden cup, when the discharged starost, Jacob Stepanovitch, walked in.

"Oh, how do you do, my dear fellow?" he cried, getting up, and pressing his hand, while he talked in a gay, lively tone. "Have you any news?"

"Yes; I have been discharged by Mr. Koretzky," answered Jacob moodily; "I am going away to-morrow, and have come to tell you this."

"Well, I don't think he was so very wrong in discharging you," answered Brushkoff, with a noiseless laugh. "And now you don't know where to go to. Oh, never mind, you will be useful in some other way, I daresay."

"No, no, Alexander Formitsch, I am perfectly disgusted with my work here; you know these people now; it is impossible to try anything with them."

"It is not yet so bad as that," said Brushkoff, laughing aloud; "I tell you, there will be no work done to-morrow here."

"The devil knows; they have seven Fridays in the week.[1] I only know you are the cause of my losing my place, and a very good place it was."

Jacob was the son of a domestic serf, and his first master had had him taught reading and writing, and made him learn the trade of a carpenter. But

[1] A Russian proverb. As much as to say: Working people are very fickle.

reading and writing did not prove very useful to him. Always gloomy and silent, he avoided the society of his companions and fellow-workers, and came entirely under the influence of a man whose aim was "to enlighten the masses." There he only succeeded in filling his head with fragments of confused teachings and ideas, while he lost all taste for real work, and neglected to learn his trade. At Biälastolby he might have had a very happy life, but he treated the peasants in a dry and contemptuous way, and gave himself up entirely to his useless day-dreams.

"Why are you so silent?" said Brushkoff, again sitting down to his turning lathe. "You said you had some business with me, did you not?"

"No; I came to ask whether you have heard of a place for me; haven't you? I want to get an appointment in town; it is nice living in a town; and then there are more opportunities of inciting people against the capitalists who are oppressing us."

At this moment the door was thrown open, and the entrance of Neradovitch interrupted Jacob's flow of words. He greeted the former starost, and turning to Brushkoff, asked,—

"Well, what was the end of the business? I saw them all returning from the ridge."

"Some of them refused to accept the agreement, but they did not come to a decision, so the village assembly is going to meet."

"May the devil take them! Are you going too, Jacob?"

Jacob repeated what he had been saying to Brushkoff, but in a dull, hesitating way, as if afraid of Neradovitch.

"There is nothing to be done in towns now," answered the latter; "the ground is not yet prepared. But I thank you for spoiling the thrashing-machine, and thus giving me the opportunity of coming here." And he bowed his head to him, as if wanting to dismiss him.

"I am very grateful to you for having made me lose my situation," answered Jacob drily, as he went away.

The door was immediately again thrown open, and the lean figure of Gondsevsky appeared in the aperture.

"Another interesting victim of lordly cruelty," said Neradovitch, greeting him and pointing to a chair, the legs of which had been turned by Brushkoff himself.

The interesting victim was dressed in a blue coat and lilac-coloured breeches, his large feet were thrust into new varnished boots, and a pink neckcloth was slung round his throat. The Pole assumed a very dignified air, and said that he had worked very hard to bring the peasants at Nikolsky to refuse every sort of arrangement.

"The undignified way in which Dmitry Alexan-

drovitch works——" he continued. But Neradovitch interrupted him.

"Eh, batushka, between us we had better drop this way of talking, I think; Dmitry Alexandrovitch did nothing wrong, after all, while you have done nothing but incite the peasants to revolt."

"You, at least, have nothing to regret," Gondsevsky went on, in an offended tone, "while I not only lost my place, but was threatened with the law. I, of course, did not yield; I am not so easily frightened."

"Stoicism is a great thing," hissed Brushkoff, between his teeth.

"Well, and what is to be done with this precious golden metal?" asked Neradovitch, drumming with his fingers on the chair on which he was sitting.

Whoever had come into the room without knowing the relations of these three men to one another would have fancied Neradovitch to be the judge of the two others, so little did he think of softening his commanding tone when talking to them.

"I can give you 800 rubles," answered Gondsevsky, drawing the notes out of his breast-pocket. "It is not much, I know, but still, after only one year of management——"

"Give them quickly; don't dawdle," cried Neradovitch, snatching at the notes; and having counted them, carefully handed them over to Brushkoff. "You have a safe hiding-place, I hope. We all know how similar earnings are got."

"And can surmise that your own interests have not suffered," added Brushkoff.

Gondsevsky made a protesting movement.

"Don't lose another word, please, but tell me how much the peasants gave you for granting them the right to cut down the timber in the manor-wood. Oh! I am not so easily deceived. Well, what's the matter?" Neradovitch cried hastily, as the land-surveyor entered the room. He did not answer at once; his short breath, dusty, flushed face, and splashed boots proved that he had been wandering far.

"You know, I suppose," he said at last, sitting down, "that they all left the ridge, and went to the village assembly. I, in the meantime, went on with my work, when suddenly the barine sent me word through a messenger that I was to leave off. This was what had happened. The rioters had got the upper hand at the assembly, and when Koretzky returned from town, old Trofime met him with the news that his agreement had been rejected. He raged and fumed. No one had ever seen him in such a state. He hurried down to the village, and talked to the peasants; but you know when once they take an idea into their heads, it is in vain to dissuade them. 'We won't have your land,' they kept repeating, 'nor will we work for you any more.' And by this resolution they abode."

His eyes flashed and sparkled. Neradovitch rubbed his hands.

"Perfect!" he said, pacing the room to and fro. "But this is insufficient; something grand must be the result of these our doings."

"I only fear that we have lost sight of one important fact," interrupted Brushkoff; "our two adherents at Biälastolby are not to be relied upon any more."

"Oh! Volodia is not much to be feared."

"And what about your adored Nadeshda Sergeïevna?"

Neradovitch turned away sharply and the veins on his forehead swelled; but Brushkoff told him how he and Vassili had met her in the village. Neradovitch listened silently, hardly able to conquer his indignation.

"Well, this is my affair," he said, when the other had concluded; "whatever happens, I fancy that Biälastolby will come to a bad end."

## CHAPTER XII.

DMITRY returned from his interview with the peasants rather late. His mother met him silently, not wishing to vex him with her reproaches, but her eyes said clearly what she thought of her son's doings.

"Volodia," said Dmitry, addressing his brother, "please to drive at once over to Tomiline, and ask him to join me to-morrow morning at Nikolsky. Tell him that my last and only hope is his influence with the peasants. If the affairs at Nikolsky are once settled, I'll manage our people here myself."

Then he gave clear and short orders to the new starost about requiring labourers from the neighbouring villages for the following day; and while giving them, his face betrayed neither the alarm nor the impatience which he usually showed in moments of difficulty. This calmness struck even Nadia, who was almost sinking into the earth with her consciousness of guilt before him. When Anna Grigorievna left them, Dmitry threw himself into a low arm-chair with an expression of deep weariness, as if

unconscious of her presence. She approached him, and said, in a voice half choked with tears,—

"You are angry with me, Dmitry, for having given you such very bad advice, and you are right——"

But he did not allow her to finish.

"Angry with you! Certainly not. Why, you have nothing to do with all this!"

Though he spoke almost gaily, she fancied she heard a ring of contempt in his voice, as if he denied even the possibility of her exercising any influence over him.

"Do you think I am so very much provoked?"

"On the contrary, I wonder how little——"

"My dear," he again interrupted her, "how little you know me. I am provoked with the starost I have been discharging; but from the peasants I never expected anything else. They can give me a great deal of bother, but provoke me, never. As for your *friend* Vassili, this is quite another matter. From him I shall ask satisfaction some day," he added, as he got up.

The word "friend" sounded to her as an indirect reproach.

"And now good-bye, Nadia; I must be up early to-morrow morning," he said, shaking hands with her.

And in fact the following day he was up at five o'clock. The peasants did not go to work, as they had threatened, and the large fields remained as

empty and still as the day before. The messenger returned from the neighbouring villages, the labourers having promised to appear in due time for the usual salary and good fees in form of vodki. Dmitry had just calculated that with the help of these labourers the corn would be gathered in in five days, when he saw the tarantass of Tomiline passing on the highroad. He hailed him, and Tomiline told him that the peasants at Nikolsky not only refused to work themselves, but even prevented the others from doing anything, threatening to carry all the scythes off from the villages.

"What is to be done?" he continued despondingly. "You know yourself that our influence is good for nothing as soon as the peasants cease to believe our words. It is like a scarecrow, which the birds cease to avoid as soon as a raven settles on it unpunished."

Dmitry sent all the labourers whom he had hired in town for his own use to Nikolsky, as he deemed himself morally bound to help Elena to conquer the revolt.

"I had intended to send Gondsevsky to prison for the knavery I discovered in his accounts," said Dmitry, sitting down in the tarantass beside Tomiline, "but my uncle and Elena Michaïlovna would not hear of it. What's the result of it now?—that we are obliged to look quietly on while he incites the peasants to open rebellion."

To his great astonishment, Dmitry found his uncle

at Nikolsky. He was in a dreadful state of excitement; in spite of Elena's presence, he was swearing most awfully, while crushing a letter in his hand.

His anger had been caused by a letter of Gondsevsky's to Elena, telling her of large sums of money paid over by him to the General, which the latter had never paid back.

Elena sent the letter immediately to the guardian of her daughter, only adding a few words to say that she did not attach the slightest importance to these revelations, while she was, in fact, delighted to vex the old man. As soon as he got this letter, he started for Nikolsky.

"I can't remain trustee for another moment, of course," he said, assuming a look of dignity. "I leave this in two days, and shall give up money, accounts, and everything, in order not to hear any more of this dirty business. In my position, with my affairs, I can't waste my time bothering about other people's business. I only accepted the place out of friendship for your late husband; I have had nothing but worry about it. Choose another trustee, please. I shan't care, though it be one of my own nephews."

His voice suddenly gave way. Elena Michaïlovna was silent. She was very glad to get rid of him; yet she thought it necessary to show her displeasure at his making a scene before her, and raising his voice so loudly in her drawing-room. He grew somewhat confused as he met her cold and proud eye.

"Gondsevsky must be arrested," he said, turning towards Dmitry, and dropping his voice; "let him never show himself before me. Je pourrai m'oublier et me porter à toutes les extrémités."

"Oh, my dear uncle, now-a-days we have no chance against a man like Gondsevsky," said Dmitry.

And turning to Elena, he began to relate all the latest events.

She listened with a studied attention, wishing to show herself grateful for all the pains he was taking on her behalf; but his words were nothing to her but vain sounds. She felt vexed, almost offended, when he talked business to her; she thought he wanted to show her the difference between the present and the past. And though they met daily, she felt that the invisible barrier between them was waxing higher and higher.

"Elena Michaïlovna, you are not listening to me," he said suddenly, struck by the strange immobility of her face.

She seemed to wake up from a deep trance.

"Oh, no, no, I am listening. I was only thinking that but for you the new steward would lose his head."

Tomiline had recommended them an old German, who happened just then to be without place.

In the neighbouring room hurried steps were heard, and Count Boris rushed into the drawing-room without greeting any one.

"What delightful peasants you have here!" he cried. "I was just returning from a walk with Eugenia Alexandrovna, when we saw crowds of people walking off the fields, carrying away all the scythes they had been able to collect."

Dmitry jumped up and seized his hat.

"Come," he cried, interrupting the Count, "let us go and see if we can't put a stop to this nonsense."

"Send for some soldiers from town," cried the Count after them, "and all will soon be right."

In the ante-room they met the new steward, who looked at Dmitry with a frightened face.

"Don't go," he said; "it would not be safe."

But nobody felt inclined to follow this advice. They had hardly left the porch before they heard loud shoutings and roarings; some stray buildings and trees still hid the fields from their sight, but when they turned the corner of the garden, they saw amidst the surging corn the whole crowd of excited and shrieking peasants. The labourers from Nikolsky and those from Biälastolby were mingling confusedly together, waving their hands and screaming without knowing why. In spite of the noise there was not the slightest fear of a collision, for there was no real passion on either side.

The appearance of the masters gave an unexpected turn to the whole affair. On seeing them the labourers from Biälastolby suddenly remembered that they had nothing to do there.

"Let us go back," said one of them; "we are not hired for Nikolsky. If they carry away the scythes, we can't work."

"That's true," cried another voice. And they went to put on their jackets, placed their scythes on their shoulders, and approached Dmitry.

"Where are you going?" asked Dmitry.

"Back to where we came from," answered one of them walking in the rear. "We were not hired for Nikolsky, and won't work here; please to dismiss us. We are not running after work; we'll find some wherever we go."

"Dismiss them," whispered Tomiline to Dmitry; "at Biälastolby they may be of use, while here they won't be allowed to work."

They now turned towards the crowd of peasants, still standing on the cornfield, a few sheaves lying about on the soil.

"How dare you prevent the others from working, because you won't do anything yourselves?" cried Dmitry.

Some of the men doffed their caps, but most of them gazed with hostile eyes on the advancing gentlemen.

"Well," answered a young man, evidently more courageous than the rest, "we have decided upon not cutting the wheat on the manor land, and shall adhere to this resolution."

"You have destroyed our agreement about the

wood," said a tall, stalwart youth, drawing very near to Dmitry, "therefore we shan't grant you any harvest this year."

The sound of his own voice seemed to intoxicate him ; it grew louder, and his face flushed.

"Be quiet, my good man," said Dmitry ; "don't come too near."

There must have been some hidden threat in his eyes, for the young man made a step backwards.

"Stanislaus Vikenditch told us that the agreement had been made in perfect accordance to the law," he began, more quietly, pointing towards the place where Gondsevsky was standing, a cigarette between his lips, and his hands in his pockets, surveying the whole scene with a mocking smile.

"And so you thought you had the right to fell the timber in the wood of your master?" asked Tomiline.

Some laughter was audible in the crowd.

"But then you see, your nobility," said a man, addressing Tomiline, and taking off his cap, "we did not get the agreement for nothing."

"I know the contents of the agreement, and know also to whom you paid the money."

Some movement was audible among the crowd.

"This is *our* business, your nobility ; whether we paid for it or not——"

"But you forget, my dear fellows," interrupted Dmitry, "that I told you in the assembly that the

steward had not the right to conclude this arrangement; do you remember?"

"And your revolt to-day is an act of insubordination, for which you will be punished, just as the peasants at Slatürsky were: fifteen men were put to prison there, as you have probably heard."

"Slatürsky is not Nikolsky," observed a red-haired man with a singularly placid face.

"Petrucha! ai, Petrucha!" suddenly cried a voice from behind; "what are we standing here for? Let us go and cut our own corn."

"Let us go then," answered Petruch, evidently convinced by the truth of the argument.

"Don't lose any more words upon them," whispered Tomiline in Dmitry's ear; "I think I have hit upon the means of helping you out of this difficulty.

The crowd of peasants having resolved to return to the village, now began to disperse, and long irregular rows were seen moving down the road.

Gondsevsky, in the meantime, approached the new steward.

"What a splendid beginning, Christopher Karlovitch," he said mockingly. "You have a wonderful system; thanks to it, the harvest will be gathered in a short time."

These words reached Dmitry's ears. He turned sharply round.

"What right have you to be here?" he asked, going up to him.

"The same as you have;" and a wicked expression crossed his face.

"I hate the sight of your hideous face, and order you without ceremony to go back to town."

Gondsevsky turned deadly pale.

"But if I were here by the wish of your uncle?" he asked, placing his right foot forward and holding his watch chain with the left hand. In spite of his challenging words and daring *pose* his voice trembled audibly.

Dmitry's hand went heavily down on the Pole's shoulder, making his infirm small form shake and tremble.

"I tell you that if you dare to show yourself in this neighbourhood to-night——. Well, I am not always master of my actions; and I advise you not to try the experiment."

"I shall certainly try," he cried, drawing back.

But Dmitry had already turned away, and was inquiring of Tomiline what plan he had contrived.

"Let us first hear what your uncle and Count Sokolnitzky think fit to propose," he answered, as he went towards the place where the two others had stopped.

"I propose to have soldiers down here," said Peter Nicolaïevitch, with a very martial air; "I shall write to the governor, and ask him to put an end to this nonsense."

"And you, Count, are you of the same opinion?" asked Dimtry.

"Perfectly; with the addition only that one peasant out of ten be flogged in the stableyard."

"Yes, that they may all feel that we have a *pouvoir fort*."

"But do you really believe that such Bonapartistical measures would ensure the success of our rural economy? It is true that order would be restored; but what then? Can soldiers thrash the corn? And who would indemnify Elena Michaïlovna for all the losses she would have to sustain?"

"And the justice of peace, is he not here for that?"

"Justice of peace! Suppose we give in our complaint to Feodor Vassilievitch, and he grants us an indemnity; how are we to get it? The harvest will be spoiled before the affair is concluded, and the feeling of hostility between the peasants and us will remain; which is equally fatal to both parties; is it not so, Feodor Vassilievitch?"

Tomiline laughed.

"Yes; we had better avoid such energetic measures, or the peasants might suppose we have lost all power over them. Now, this is what I propose. Your peasants at Biälastolby, I think, would be very happy to come and work here at Nikolsky for the usual salary. Their own land is very small, and they are not fond of idling about. But you can't

propose this yourself. If you will allow me to call them together to-morrow, I'll make them this proposition; in the meantime, you send in your complaint about the riots here, which will give them a good fright, for in harvest-time no one likes to be shut up."

This plan was adopted. Tomiline and Dmitry left immediately afterwards.

"Pray make my excuses to your cousin," said Dmitry to Boris; "I shall be here again the day after to-morrow."

They drove for some time in deep silence; Tomiline looked very pre-occupied, in spite of the high spirits he had just displayed.

"Do you know for whom I tremble, Dmitry Alexandrovitch?" Tomiline asked suddenly; "not for you, and certainly not for Elena Michaïlovna. We shall get over the present difficulties, there is no doubt about that. But I tremble for Nadia Sergeïevna, poor child; they will strike her down like a tree in the forest. If only there was some one to watch over her! How is she? I have not seen her for a long time."

Dmitry muttered some indistinct words, and a hot flush mounted to his brow.

"May she remain as long as possible in your mother's house. I always admired the way in which Anna Grigorievna treated her. Have you made your peace with her, or are you still wrangling?"

"I!" cried Dmitry, seizing Tomiline's hand, "I —I tell you I shall watch over her, and protect her against the whole world, for each hair of her head is dearer to me than my own life."

## CHAPTER XIII.

TOMILINE'S calculation proved true. He had no great difficulty in convincing the peasants at Biälastolby. It is true some of them adhered to their first refusal, saying they had never experienced anything but oppression at Nikolsky, but they were soon ousted by other more practical householders, who thought it a great boon to earn twenty-two rubles per deciatine during harvest-time. The Russian peasant never refuses a profit for principle's sake.

In the meantime Dmitry and Volodia were out in the fields, giving their orders with zeal and precision. The silent fields were now alive with labourers: the women's sarafans, and the young girls' red kerchiefs, were shining brightly among the white shirts of the men. Volodia gave his orders in a loud voice, looking very flushed and hot and self-satisfied. Dmitry smiled a little at his unwonted zeal, and the new starost, a clever and stately man, praised him with that slightly mocking expression which is peculiar to the Russian labourer when talking to his superiors.

When Volodia heard about the rioting at Nikolsky, he wanted to rush thither at once to help Elena

Michaïlovna, and Dmitry had the greatest difficulty to arrest his chivalrous ardour, proving to him that his presence was not wanted at all, as their own peasants had promised to work there during harvest-time.

"Wait a little," he said, at last, "and we'll go there together the day after to-morrow."

The riots at Nikolsky put Volodia in mind of his meeting with Neradovitch in the post-house, and he guessed at once the link which existed between the peasants' revolt and the appearance of this active ringleader. As the interests and peace of mind of Jenny suffered under these events, he was ready to hate those people with whom he had so fully sympathised a short time ago. He told Dmitry about this meeting, adding,—

"Hitherto I have attached no importance to his words, but now I clearly see that he is at the bottom of this whole affair. He has confederates, I suppose —Vassili, Gondsevsky——"

"I know, I know; do you really fancy you have discovered America?" interrupted Dmitry, smiling.

"And Brushkoff, too. I disliked this man from the beginning." He had once happened to answer Volodia in a somewhat sharp tone.

"Do you think so? Well, I confess, I don't fear them; they won't gain the confidence of the peasants so very easily, and will never acquire a real power over them."

On the following day things looked quite different at Nikolsky. The peasants had been cited to the justice of peace for not having fulfilled their contracts with the landlord, and were, moreover, vexed to see the peasants from a neighbouring estate pocket so much money for gathering in the harvest. They resolved at last to make their submission, and sent a deputation of four men to the steward. These approached him very meekly.

"How is this, Christopher Karlovitch?" they said; "you call in strangers to do our work, and treat us as if we did not exist, or had offended you."

The steward received this declaration with the greatest indifference, assuring them, without putting away his *Rigasehe Zeitung*, that it was too late now, as the peasants from Biälastolby were hired for the whole harvest-time.

The deputation withdrew slowly. A few hours later another one came. They found Tomiline in the steward's office. On seeing the justice of peace, they bowed very deeply, and sighed with a contrite air. Feodor Vassilievitch resolved to profit by their peaceful state of mind, and thus kill two birds with one stone. He proposed to them to exchange their work at Nikolsky for that at Biälastolby. They did not answer at once, for the Russian peasant never accepts a proposition without reflection, as he always fancies people want to take him in. Towards evening, however, they had accepted, and Tomiline was

very proud of having thus provided both estates with labourers. All went smoothly, and to the superficial looker-on there was nowhere the slightest sign of dissatisfaction to be seen; yet Anna Grigorievna shook her head distrustfully, and did not believe in the proud, self-confident views of her son. She did not mix herself in the orders he gave, but she looked askance at him with silent wonder, as old people are apt to do after having given up the management of their own affairs. She had lost all her former buoyancy, and now sat for hours at her knitting, while the slow, even ticking of the pendulum was the only sound which disturbed the quietness of the room. It was strange to see her thus: something like renunciation was visible in her face, and though her maternal heart was full of pride and joy when thinking of her eldest son, yet a dark cloud often gathered on her brow, and her soft features took a stony expression. Life seemed dull and hard to her, and she felt it doubly, as she had no one to whom to confide these feelings. Neither to her brother-in-law nor to her niece would she unburden herself; on the contrary, she had never felt so much inclined to silence as in their presence.

Her brother-in-law had not remained long at Biälastolby. Three days after having received Gondsevsky's note, he wrote a dry, business-like letter to Elena, telling her that he resigned his place as trustee to Jenny, and asking her to excuse him, if

on account of a bad cough, which he had caught in this out-of-the-way village, he did not come to take leave of her. He returned after this to Petersburg, declaring to all the members of the family that it was perfectly unbearable to live in the country.

As for Nadia, Anna Grigorievna continued to treat her coldly. However much she tried to conquer her ill-will towards her, she did not succeed. Dmitry, it is true, gave her no cause for uneasiness: he was so much taken up with field-labour that they hardly ever met. Yet in her aunt's eyes she always remained a guilty, untrustworthy being, ready to betray the hospitable family who had nursed and tended the homeless orphan in her distress. How this change had come about, she could not tell herself. The alienation between her and her niece had grown imperceptibly, as noxious weeds shoot up on the fields. On the other side, Nadia felt that life had become intolerable to her in her aunt's house; the same moral numbness which had seized Anna Grigorievna had overcome her; she spent her days in perfect laziness, never opening a book, hardly ever appearing in the village; a dull feeling pervaded her whole being, such as one experiences before the outburst of a violent thunderstorm.

A whole week passed in this way. The weather remained perfectly lovely; there was neither rain, nor wind, nor thunder. This eternal quiet almost exasperated the young girl. When her eyes fell on

the never-changing, dark-blue vault of heaven, when she listened to the dreamy murmurings of the rustling leaves, a nameless impatience took hold of her. It seemed to her as if nature, like herself, was expecting an unavoidable catastrophe.

During this whole week Dmitry had only been once at Nikolsky; he felt that he could trust the new steward, who was a prudent and clever man, while his own affairs wanted to be looked after. Besides, he always felt uncomfortable in Elena's presence, and this half-conscious sensation, which he had experienced immediately after his last scene with her, grew stronger the more the remembrance of it retreated in the distance; nor did Volodia visit any more at Nikolsky. He felt instinctively that he was distasteful to Elena Michaïlovna; and though resolved not to despair of the future, yet his heart failed him when in her presence. He trusted Jenny entirely, and did not feel jealous of Count Sokolnitzky any longer. Yet patience has its end, even that of a lover; and when a fortnight had elapsed without his having been to Nikolsky, or having seen the Ordinzoffs at Biälastolby, he began to fancy that she had disappeared in some misty distance, never to return thence any more. The days seemed long and sad to him, and the eternally blue sky jarred on his nerves. His zeal for the harvest had abated; he roved listlessly about the fields, without minding the burning July sun. At last he felt that it was

impossible to go on any longer in this way, and saddling his horse stealthily, as if committing a crime, he rode off towards Nikolsky.

It was beginning to darken; the fields were all alive with the gaiety and endless movement of a busy working day drawing towards its close; long rows of heavily-laden carts were moving over the traceless stubble fields, crossing, meeting, and creaking at the smallest impediment. The soft evening air resounded with laughter and mirth; children were playing about, teasing and provoking the girls more than helping them; some of them, standing on the carts, caught the flying sheaves in the air, laughing mockingly at the women, whose strength was not always sufficient to throw those heavy loads upwards. Others wanted to caress the girls with their wooden forks, and were sometimes repaid for their efforts with sound kicks. And this many-coloured, moving and buzzing crowd, in spite of its seeming disorder, was leading all, little by little, to a successful end. On the fields the corn-heaps were quickly disappearing; while, on the shore of the lake, not far from the thrashing barn, high and stately ricks were rising, as if a new village, composed of straw and corn, had suddenly emerged opposite the old one. In the far distance the empty telegas were leaving the field, the drivers' voices resounding gaily in the evening stillness.

But all this beauty was lost on Volodia. He spurred his horse, and drove it mercilessly on, though only

six versts separated him from Nikolsky. Before reaching the entrance, he stopped, however, thinking it might be safe to go in through the garden door. Hardly knowing why he preferred this side way, he alighted and tied his horse to a tree, but he had hardly taken a few steps before he was arrested by a voice, talking in loud and passionate accents. It was Count Sokolnitzky's.

"Vous ne m'avez pas compris, Jenny; je voulais——"

But Jenny interrupted him hotly; then suddenly all was silent, as if they had heard Volodia's approaching steps.

Jenny was sitting on the same bench under the tree on which she had sat on the memorable day, which Volodia would never be able to forget. The hot flush on her cheeks and the bright glare of her eyes proved that the foregoing conversation had been rather exciting. The Count was standing before her, twirling his moustaches, and looking pale and downcast. Volodia's appearance had evidently vexed him.

"You are so remarkably obstinate, dear cousin; but then you know, perhaps, that it suits you very well," he said, with a forced laugh; and slightly nodding to Volodia, walked off towards the house.

Volodia looked inquiringly at the young girl, hardly daring to address her; then he sank down on the bench beside her, and took hold of her hand.

"What's the matter? What has this man been saying to you?" he asked eagerly, as if he had the right to know all that concerned her.

"Don't mention him, please. I won't see him any more. I won't listen to him," she cried brokenly; then wiping her eyes, she started up. "I know that mamma wants me to marry him—— He allowed himself—— But this will not be."

These unconnected words alarmed Volodia to the highest degree; he began to question her very closely, but it was no easy matter to get Jenny to say what she did not want to say. Her self-possession and resolution had suddenly returned.

"Never mind what he said or did," she said, a little sharply; "quite enough for you to know what I told you." Then suddenly her mood changed, and she added, almost in a whisper, "I shall never, never consent to be his wife."

Volodia felt a rush of joy overflooding him at these words. He seized her hand and carried it to his lips.

From the first day of his arrival Boris had been courting Jenny. Elena evidently supported this courtship, and it must be confessed that Jenny lent a willing ear to his adoring words, for, without this encouragement, it is hardly probable that he would have thought of courting a girl hardly out of the nursery. Be it however as it may, on this evening he seemed to have been rather forward, for his arm had

stolen round her slender waist, and he had made an effort to kiss her half-parted, smiling lips. This trial, however, cost him dear, and he lost all the result of his courtship at once and for ever. Jenny escaped out of his embrace, and placing herself before him, broke out in a torrent of abusive words. He tried in vain to quiet her. She did not rush off like a frightened child, but answered all his arguments with so much dignity that he began to get confused, and felt that he was losing ground with her.

She gave Volodia a bright smile, and said,—

"I have heard a great deal of you since ——"

"Since we sat here together on this bench," he interrupted her eagerly. "Only fancy what I have suffered, not seeing you for sixteen whole days!"

"Sixteen!" she laughed aloud. "How well you count. Yet you quite forgot to come and see us."

"No; but do you really fancy I did not observe the unkind way in which your mother treated me?"

These words made her laugh still more merrily. She could not conceive people fancying Elena Michaïlovna to have the slightest influence over her.

"So you see, Jenny, I followed your advice," he said, his voice trembling. "I am no longer the man I was——"

"I know, I know; and I am so glad." This time she quite forgot to scold him for having called her by her name.

"Well, Jenny, may I then hope to receive the promised reward soon?"

"'Promised!' I never promised anything," she cried archly.

"If I don't get an answer at once,"—and he drew quite near to her,—"I'll go directly to Elena Michaïlovna and tell her."

"No; you must not say anything to her. I know beforehand that she will refuse her consent."

"Then I don't care for her answer if you only——"

His arm stole round her waist, but this time she did not withdraw, and a tender kiss finished what he had left unsaid. But suddenly she started away from him; her quick ear had caught the sound of approaching steps.

"It is mamma," she whispered, straightening some stray curls on her brow. The light dress of Elena had become visible among the branches.

## CHAPTER XIV.

TO Elena the last days had been the worst she had known in her whole life. A few days ago she thought she only needed to stretch out her hand to catch the long-coveted happiness of her life, and now it had receded far away into a misty, perfectly unattainable distance. In the beginning she tried to comfort herself with the hope that all would come right again; but one day passed after the other, one sleepless night succeeded the other, and Dmitry remained obstinately silent. He behaved just as if nothing particular had ever taken place between them, and she sometimes fancied her whole past to have been a dream. But could he really have forgotten the love he had felt for her since her very childhood? No, this seemed impossible. Yet, though trying to convince herself of this, she began to look for the cause of his sudden change. And it suddenly flashed through her mind that he must be in love with another woman, and that this could be none but Nadia seemed perfectly sure to her.

Once, as she expressed her astonishment at Borofisky's not having called upon them for ever so long,

Jenny told her of Nadia's rejection of him. This acted like a thunderbolt upon her. She quickly combined this fact with Dmitry's change, and the last trace of a doubt vanished from her heart. All that had been dim and undefined till now suddenly took a definite form; for in the eyes of a woman the merest trifle serves as a full argument. There was the explanation so ardently sought for. She had worshipped him for ten long years, withstood every temptation on his account, and now this wretched girl appears, and these ten years are wiped away out of his heart as if they had never existed. With true female logic she now accused Dmitry as the cause of her mercenary marriage and loveless life. Such was the reward of her blameless past! Burning tears of hatred blinded her. Her whole existence might have been different, leaving her sweet recollections for old age, while now—— Her first youth was passed; its golden brightness would never return; her heart would never more beat with the full, trusting fondness of a young love. It has often been said that the worst of all trials is a first delusion. This is not true. The worst and hardest to bear is to lose a last hope. It is true Elena was still young and pretty, yet the remembrance of her wasted years—this true hell on earth—would suffice to poison the rest of her life. She spent the whole night tossing to and fro on her bed, these burning thoughts driving madly through her brain. In the morning, when she gazed at her

features in the looking-glass, she started back aghast. Her eyes had deep shades under them, and on her brow a hardly perceptible fold appeared, like a warning of approaching decay. To the lookers-on Elena remained the same dignified being as hitherto, but a whirlwind of wicked, rebellious thoughts raged within her, and she hated the whole surrounding world because her own life was ruined. In the meantime Dmitry had almost ceased to visit at Nikolsky, and Elena knew that he avoided her. Only once in a fortnight he had made his appearance, and if he had been able to read in her heart what she felt, he, the strong man, would have trembled.

He had now come over again, while Volodia was sitting in the garden with Jenny, for he wanted to know how the steward was getting on. He had had his talk with him, and had now gone in search of Elena, whom he found on the terrace facing the garden. She was reclining in a low armchair, her eyes riveted on the fancy-work in her hand.

"Well, Elena Michailovna," he said gaily, sitting down beside her, "I can now with a good conscience return to your hands the reins of government which you entrusted to me. Christopher Karlovitch is a treasure; and all is progressing fairly, I think."

"Indeed!" she answered listlessly, giving him a quick glance, and then looking down at her work again. "I am very grateful to you for the pains you have been taking."

Dmitry lighted a cigarette and began to smoke.

For a few moments a deep silence reigned between them. It was the first time since they had known each other that they found nothing to speak of. Elena was the first to recover herself. She awoke as out of a trance, and began a lively conversation, mingling the greatest political interests with the smallest details of Petersburg life. There was a proud ring in her voice while mentioning intimately the grandest personages of the capital, and it seemed as if the old Elena, who had so well known how to amuse her guests and say the right thing to them, was again wakening up to life. But this sparkling wit sounded unpleasantly in Dmitry's ears.

"Do you know," he said suddenly, "that these same topics were mentioned between us on that first evening in Petersburg when we were introduced to each other?"

"This strikes you as strange," she answered, all the gladness having died out of her voice, "because you are now entirely devoted to farming, though you were educated for something far higher, I daresay."

"I don't care," he said, with a slight frown; "the present age is a matter-of-fact age."

"And you are glad of it?" she asked, flashing up. "I told you that it is impossible to bury oneself in the desert unpunished; earlier or later it impresses its seal on every brow."

"Perhaps," he answered curtly.

She put down her work, raising herself in her arm-chair.

"I begin to experience this myself, and shall therefore soon leave this place."

"Indeed!" he said, in a perfectly placid voice; "you never mentioned this before. And for how long are you going away?"

"This must be a very indifferent matter to you, Dmitry Alexandrovitch; besides, I hardly know myself. I am perfectly free, and can change my mind as often as I like. Liberty is a good thing, is it not? You want to know when I shall return to Nikolsky. Never, I fancy. Je ne me sens pas appelée à jouer à la châtelaine."

She gave a short laugh, then getting up, carried her work over to the other side of the terrace. She busied herself with a large straw work-basket, as if Dmitry had not been there. Then bending down over the baluster, she began inhaling the sweet perfume of a magnificent tea-rose.

"This rose is lovely, is it not?" she said, without looking at him. "I am so fond of roses; don't you like them?" And again she revelled in the fragrant odour. "Will you have it?" She broke it off, with a strangely stony expression, as if not minding its thorns.

"There!" she said, without looking round at him, and loosening her fingers before he could take it, the rose fell down on the stone floor. She turned

quickly round with blazing eyes, and seeing that he was still at the other end of the terrace, added,—

"You are not waiting for me to dismiss you, I suppose? You had better go home, I fancy; such a good farmer as you are ought never to leave home."

He came up to her, and bent down to raise the rose; but she snatched it from him, and threw it down into the garden below.

"I forgot that you have plenty of flowers at Biälastolby," she said. And, seeing that she had pricked her fingers rather badly, "I cannot even shake hands with you," she added; "so good-bye."

She hardly bowed her head, but remained motionless in the twilight, staring at the door behind which he had disappeared. Her brow was frowning, and a hard and wicked expression shone in her eyes.

"Finished! for ever past!" a mocking voice was whispering in her ear. She did not even turn round as Boris appeared on the terrace.

"I have just met Dmitry Alexandrovitch," he said, coming up to her, "and I wanted very much to ask him how long he intends to act the Grand Vizier at Nikolsky. But what's the matter, cousin? are you ill?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, pressing her hand to her burning brow.

"Allow me to give you a bit of advice, my dear; beware of these Koretzkys; their intimacy will never bring you any luck."

"Are you going to leave us?"

"I have been a long time here, cousin; it is time for me to go home."

She suddenly remembered her matrimonial plans for him, and began to press him to stay; but she did it so oddly and coldly, that Boris burst into a loud laugh.

"No, cousin," he said, guessing what was passing in her mind, "I can't promise you to stay; we shall meet later in the autumn: Russians always meet somewhere abroad, for they never stay long in the same place. So good-bye, and *au revoir* either in Biarritz or Ventnor."

And he pressed his lips to her hand, while his clever eyes twinkled archly.

"But you never said good-bye to Jenny," she exclaimed, trying to keep him back.

"I have been with her in the garden," he answered. "I left her there just now with Volodia Koretzky."

Having said this in a perfectly indifferent tone, he turned on his heels and left the room. These words sufficed, however, to give a new direction to Elena's thoughts. She had long wished to put a stop to the young man's courtship, and just now she wanted to vent all her angry feelings on somebody. She hurried down into the garden, and walked quickly on towards the aspen-tree. The young people were coming on in her direction. She bowed coldly to Volodia, and addressed her step-daughter.

"Jenny, ma chère, rentrez, je vous prie; Miss Finch vous cherche partout."

Jenny obeyed silently, though she knew very well that Miss Finch never thought of looking after her. Elena walked slowly back with Volodia. He knew that she was going to give him a lecture, and though he did not think she had any right to do so, yet he felt rather embarrassed.

"I regret very much that you did not ask for *me*, Vladimir Alexandrovitch," she said, with a deep stress on the word "me."

The young man blushed with offended dignity and a little with shame.

"You know I am always delighted to see you," she went on. But neither her voice nor her eyes confirmed those pleasant words.

Volodia did not answer, so they reached the house in silence.

"Won't you have a cup of tea?" she asked, as they got to the terrace. But the icy tone of her words belied the invitation. He took a hurried leave of her, and hastened away, while she, hardly bending her head to him, mounted the stairs with her usual light step.

"If he has the slightest *savoir-faire*," she thought, "he will understand that he is not to come here any more."

Volodia soon found his horse. Though Nikolsky was now almost shut upon him, he was in the wildest

of spirits. He had no doubts of the future, or rather he never gave a thought to it, the present being much too delightful. His love for Jenny filled his heart so entirely that he had no other thought beside her. To his great astonishment, he found Dmitry on the staircase, talking to the new steward. He had not heard anything of his intention to ride over to Nikolsky.

"What a lovely evening!" said Volodia, turning to the old German, his kind nature always prompting him to address a few words to those he met.

"Very," he answered; "but I fear we are going to have rain; there is no wind at all, and the sky is so very red."

"Are you going to cut your wheat to-morrow?" asked Dmitry, springing into the saddle.

The steward answered him, going into a great many details. He was evidently delighted with his place, in spite of the difficulties he had had of late.

"Yes," said Dmitry; "we can say that we have got out of a rather difficult position."

"Have we, indeed?" said the German, shaking his head. "I think we have to be very prudent still. While your peasants were working here, I observed great tokens of dissatisfaction with them still; please forgive my saying so. They even hinted at the red cock."

"Nonsense, Christopher Karlovitch. Besides, all my measures are taken, the buildings are finished and

the ricks all put up. We have three fire-engines, and the watchman has a fourth one."

"Still, I say, be on your guard. Gondsevsky is not far from here; he is staying at the post-house; and some of my men heard him declare that he will kill you."

"Well, then, let him try," said Dmitry, laughing.

Volodia, in the meantime, was deeply buried in his thoughts. His horse was quietly browsing the wheat-ears, and he himself did not hear one word of what his brother said.

"Vladimir Alexandrovitch," he suddenly heard the German's voice in his ear, "I hear you did wonders during harvest-time. What a splendid horse you have!"

"Yes, I am very fond of farming. What a marvellous evening!" he said smilingly, gazing at the sky, on which a few pale stars were appearing, and breathing fully the sweet summer night air.

The two brothers rode slowly on towards Biälastolby.

## CHAPTER XV.

ON the highroad to Biälastolby, about three versts from the village, there was a small hill covered with thick-set cytisus, out of which rose a clumsy-looking building, very like a fortress, such as are often seen on bad engravings. On drawing nearer, it proved to be a high, square enclosure, made of yellow-greyish rough bricks, at one corner of which was a large stone isba, with a straw-thatched roof, and the entrance-door in the middle of it. In many places the white plaster had crumbled off the walls, leaving the bricks bare, and the wooden frames of the windows, with their greenish panes, were mostly rotten. This was the well-known post-house, where all the corn-dealers stopped on their way to town. It had been held for ten years by a man named Akime Egoroff Sabuldaïeff, who looked the picture of health, with his small but strong and stout body and his purple, well-satisfied face. Summer and winter he might be seen in the same greasy, half-open kaftan, with its flannel lining. He never felt the cold nor the heat, and never experienced any other

moral impression than the joy at the money he got for his post-horses and public-house. He knew his business thoroughly, though he could neither read nor write. His accounts were kept by a very robust young man, named Makard, with a simpering, stupid face. The house was never empty, neither by night nor by day; the unceasing noise of trampling horses, chuckling hens, scratching the dung-hill to find some stray corn, of barking dogs and shrieking drivers and travellers asking loudly for a glass of vodki, filled it from morning till night. It had become a sort of fashion to stop at Akime's. Complaints were never heard of him, though he passed for a very harsh man, who never forgave an offence nor renounced a claim which was due to him. Perhaps people liked him so very much on account of his odd sayings and his courteous ways, and therefore did not mind his sometimes wearing the fur coat which had been left with him as a pledge.

Yet it was no very attractive place, this house of Akime's: the entrance to it from the fields was always full of mud and putrid odours. In the large bar-room, on the left side, everything, from the walls and floor to the shabby furniture, had a penetrating smell of wood soaked with vodki. The host slept behind a partition wall, having long ago packed off his family to some more out-of-the-way place. To the right was the so-called "clean room" for guests, though its cleanness was of a somewhat dubious

nature. Its ornaments consisted of greasy hangings, a torn leather sofa, and three gaudy pictures, representing the passage of Suvaroff over the Tshortoff Mort, the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas, and the rich man in hell, to whom Abraham refuses a drop of water. Some geranium flower-pots on the window-sill proclaimed the poetical tastes of the host. Behind this room was a smaller one, which had been taken now by Gondsevsky.

Akime was sitting on the doorstep, chatting gaily. He had just returned from a visit to the melon and cucumber beds, which he had on Ukhoff's estate, looking weary and hot, but very satisfied. The water melons and cucumbers were thriving splendidly.

The sun was standing high in the cloudless sky, sending its merciless rays down on his damp face, making it look very much like a bit of raw meat. A shaggy sheep-dog was fawning upon his master with wild howlings and a continual tinkling of his chain. It was the same day on which the rye-harvest had been concluded, and on which the two brothers had been to Nikolsky.

Brushkoff's voice was heard outside talking with Neradovitch. The host rose, and went towards them. Upon their wish, he took them into Gondsevsky's room, and shut the door behind them. The Pole was sitting on his bed, in a rather slovenly attire, cleaning his doubled-barrelled gun.

"Are you going out to shoot?" asked Brushkoff.

"Yes," he answered, without looking up.

"Then allow me to ask for what sort of wild beasts your ball is destined?" continued Brushkoff, taking up a bullet lying on the bed. "At this time of the year we have neither wolves nor foxes—— Well, it is your business, not mine. And now I have a request to make of you. Please to leave this room a moment; I have something to say to Liev Alexandrovitch. You see I treat you without ceremony."

"Please do just as you like; I have finished," answered Gondsevsky, getting up and going out into the street, taking his gun with him.

Brushkoff threw the cartridge under the bed before sitting down upon it.

"Our affairs are in a bad state: Vassili was arrested this morning."

"Indeed, I did not know. Was anything found in his room?"

"Two or three little books; we never fully trusted him, you know. As for us, I think it is time to leave now, before they begin to suspect us."

"Why?" asked Neradovitch, with a shrug, sitting down in his turn on the bed, as there was no other chair in the room. "Here no one has the slightest idea who I am, and in Tshornaïa Khutora they will never guess: the volost elder is a confirmed ass.

Neradovitch had finished mending the boiler at Nikolsky; but Dmitry had entrusted him with the thrashing-machine.

"You say no one knows who you are. This is not quite exact; we all know that you have your own little romance here.

"Please to leave me and my affairs alone," cried Neradovitch, with blazing eyes.

"Just as you like; but please tell me on whose account are we dawdling about here? Has our propaganda thriven in any way? Have we succeeded with this vaudeville revolt on the estates of these grand ladies from Petersburg? Draw the total sum of our doings here, and drop all your hollow phrases. Really, I wonder at you; you are no fool, Neradovitch, but you have not contrived to do anything grand as yet."

Neradovitch listened patiently till the other had finished.

"Indeed, my dear fellow," he said, "I wonder at your not seeing any farther than your nose. Did you really fancy that I was going to raise a great revolution in this very small Biälastolby? I never thought of it, and shall never dream of doing anything grand with the steppe peasants."

"Why then——"

But Neradovitch, starting up, did not allow him to finish.

"All your doubts," he said, "come from your wish

to see some startling effect of our doings. Our work is underground work; we know of no brilliant opera finale. Even though the pulling down of a house be quicker work than raising it up, the pulling down may be useful too. We don't know our people yet, and the slight efforts we make only tend one way—to know them better and get more closely connected with them. It may be toilsome work,—I confess it; but what can we do? We are undermining walls of many ages' standing. Though they do not crumble down quickly, we must go on with our diggings."

"Well, I tell you that this sort of peaceful propaganda is not worth a penny."

A mocking smile played round Neradovitch's lips.

"Have you such very cruel instincts that you can't wait?" he asked. "Believe me, impatience will ruin us."

"What, do you really fancy that we are ignorant of your true reason for loitering? You ruin the whole work because of your love for that girl; it keeps you here in idleness, paralysing your strength and will."

Neradovitch turned deadly pale.

"No, let me finish," cried Brushkoff hotly; "I have long wanted to tell you this. You won't leave Biälastolby on account of this imperial beauty, who is ready to betray us all."

"She! betray us! impossible! I know her too well."

"Of two things one," said Brushkoff mockingly, on seeing the violent excitement of Neradovitch: "either she is for us; then let her show it by her deeds; or she is a traitress, and then she ought to be punished. But this, of course, you won't allow."

"She is no traitress, she——"

"Does she help us in any way? Did she not do her utmost to win Vassili over the other day? And who betrayed him now, if not she? Yes; she would give us up to justice, all of us, for her lover's sake."

"Her lover!" shrieked Neradovitch, with blazing eyes.

"Yes; don't you know, or won't you know? But it is in everybody's mouth. She is going to marry young Dmitry Alexandrovitch; and when a woman is in love, much she cares for her social convictions."

Neradovitch did not listen any longer; he had seized his hat; and slamming the door after him, so that the walls shook, he hurried out of the room. He was in that state of over-excitement in which the cleverest man is capable of committing the greatest follies. He must see Nadia, wherever she might be. He could not forgive himself for not having tried to have an interview with her of late. She is so very young, he thought, she may easily be led astray, and

then she would be entirely lost for the great work. Did he really care for this great work now? This was a question he did not like to put to himself. But how succeed in seeing Nadia? Write to her? This time she would not come, though she knew of no fear for herself, and had answered his threats with new threats. Await her in the garden? But there he might meet Volodia. Ask the gardener where to find her? This would be too dangerous, and might lead to his being discovered. So nothing remained for him but to trust to chance.

He spent three whole hours in the copse, not far from the road that led to the small bridge, in the hope of seeing her appear. All in vain. He then resolved to write to her, if his last faint hope of meeting her in the garden also proved a failure. She used to walk down to the school after dinner, having the whole management of it in her hands; and of a Sunday afternoon she held a sort of examination with the boys. On passing the schoolroom window he fancied he heard her voice. Yes, she was there. She had gone down to see Brushkoff, pretending to talk over some school matters with him, but really to try and learn what Neradovitch was contriving. She suffered under the present quiet, which seemed to her the forerunner of some great catastrophe, and thought it her duty to make an effort to learn something of her former confederate's plans for the future. Neradovitch sprang up the steps and

tore open the door. She was sitting on a bench. Brushkoff, a cigarette between his teeth, was explaining something to her. She turned round at the noise of the opening door, and a sudden flush mounted to her brow, but she tried to hide her embarrassment, and to shake hands with him with an indifferent look; after which she turned again to Brushkoff, as if to take up the broken thread of their conversation.

"*Our* conversation is now at an end, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," said Brushkoff mockingly; "Liev Alexandrovitch has important news to communicate to you, I suppose." And without waiting for an answer he walked away.

The door had hardly closed upon him before Nadia turned her eyes steadily on Neradovitch, every trace of embarrassment having disappeared from her face.

"I did not know you were still here," she said.

He answered her with the same challenging look. They were like two enemies measuring their strength.

"Oh, I am not thinking of leaving. Do you really think I should go away without calling you to account?"

His threatening tone made no impression on her.

"Call me to account as much as you like," she said, without taking her eyes off his face for a moment.

He now began to pour out a torrent of reproaches, accusing her of his failure with the peasants, and of

Vassili's arrest; yet it was easy to see that he did not believe his own words.

"If I had intended to betray you, I should have done so long ago," she answered, quickly and decidedly.

Neradovitch caught at the slightest pretence for peacemaking; he had not tried to find her only to upbraid her and force her to break entirely with them.

"But if it is so, how do you explain your strange behaviour? Where is the co-operation which I had the right to count upon?"

"Co-operation? Did I ever promise anything? Did you not see the loathing which your words awakened within me when we met the last time in the wood?"

Her nostrils quivered and her eyes flashed contemptuously. But, strange to say, he did not yet despair; on the contrary, the more hostile she looked the softer and tenderer did his voice grow.

"Oh, Nadia," he exclaimed, "you would not talk in this way if you did not seek to excuse your treason in your own eyes; you are under some strange influence now."

"Because I refuse to be your confederate? It is your own fault; you opened my eyes yourself. What sort of interest for public affairs is yours? You knew that Dmitry was going to grant the peasants' wish; and who hindered his transaction with them?

who but you and your confederates? And you want me to remain true to your party!"

"You don't belong to my party any more! You even tried to detach Vassili from us."

"Yes," she cried eagerly, "I did, and shall do it over again whenever I see you leading the poor blind peasants astray on account of some mysterious aim of your own."

"Nadia, you begin to talk the language of our enemies. You trust those people, who never cared for the peasants' welfare, who only try to avert danger from their own heads by throwing some doubtful gifts into their lap at some decisive moment. Believe me, sacrifices are necessary; and if they seem heavy to you, confess, at least, that we who impose them are disinterested. Our hands are clean; that you must see for yourself."

"You disinterested! you clean!" she cried indignantly. "Do you forget our last meeting at Moscow? Was it your love of the people that spoke so loudly within you then?"

"And if it was really so, Nadia; if I did, in fact, only remain here to protect you, to watch over you——"

She started up with flashing eyes.

"Don't trouble about me," she cried scornfully. "Oh, now I see, these are the high-flown aims for which you rob the peasants of their calm happiness! Can't you see the difference between your wretched

comedy and the efforts of those who try in earnest to alleviate their sufferings without hollow phrases?"

Neradovitch turned deadly pale.

"You defend those people very warmly, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he said, gazing hard at her.

"It is the feeling of truth and justice which prompts me."

"What do I care for truth? What would become of us if we were to humble ourselves before the virtues of our enemies?"

He began pacing the room hurriedly.

"But you are not true, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, when you talk of truth and justice; much do women care for that! You do not take the part of the Koretzkys because they are truer and better than we are, but——"

Her eyes dropped before his.

"Don't I read your thoughts on your blushing face? Why do I want your confession? You betrayed your conviction because you are in love with Dmitry Alexandrovitch!"

These words almost drove her mad; she forgot all prudence.

"And I break with you once and for ever," she cried proudly; "I do it openly and bravely, you see; I disdain your power."

His self-possession entirely forsook him; his rage knew no bounds.

"So you speak at last!" he shouted; "as if I had

not known how false you were long ago! But the day of reckoning will come, and he whom you love will have to pay for you."

He rushed out of the room, slamming the door after him.

She sank down on the bench, covering her face with her hands. Rage and indignation struggled within her breast, yet she felt lighter and freer than she had done for a long time. The awful duplicity of her life was at an end. But her physical strength failed her; it seemed to her as if she could not get up.

Little by little a great quiet overcame her. The same peace seemed to reign around her: the evening was beginning to darken, the last slanting sunbeams only falling on the church cross; the people in the street were getting fewer.

Suddenly a herd of cattle swept past the school-room windows, their loud roarings and bellowings waxing fainter and fainter as they retreated in the distance, until all grew quiet again. A large night butterfly, dashing about the room, struck with its wings against the window panes, fluttering up and down. The young girl woke up as out of a trance. On seeing how late it was, she roused herself completely. She must see Dmitry immediately. So she hurried downstairs, and walked quickly back towards the manor-house.

## CHAPTER XVI.

DMITRY and Volodia rode very slowly back to Biälastolby; the cool night air refreshed their flushed faces, a soft, light breeze stirred the leaves of the wood, and the yellow moon floated dream-like on the misty border of the horizon. Crowds of thrips, trembling in its whitening rays, hovered in the air round them. A deep silence reigned everywhere; the brothers' hearts were too full of the impressions received at Nikolsky to be able to exchange their thoughts. Dmitry had left with a heavy heart. His conversation with Elena weighed on his mind; it seemed to him as if some thread had snapt asunder in his life. Volodia, on the contrary, felt more and more joyful the farther he came from Nikolsky.

"Mitia," he exclaimed suddenly, reigning in his horse, "she will be my wife, you know; she told me so herself to-day. I am wild with delight."

"Don't be too hopeful, my dear boy; it won't be so very easy to get Elena Michaïlovna's consent, I think."

But Volodia would hear of no difficulties.

"In that case Jenny can do what she likes," he cried; "we don't want her consent; she is not Jenny's own mother."

"No, but she is her guardian; don't be too sanguine. You will have to wait, at least, two years."

But Volodia refused to listen to him; with a lovers' true egotism, he began to develop all his plans, being fully convinced that nothing on earth was more important to Dmitry than listening to the wild ravings of his younger brother. They were now slowly entering the ravine; two whole versts still remained before they reached the manor-house.

"I had a most ridiculous letter to-day from Blumenstein and Elborussi," said Volodia, lighting his cigar. "They wanted me to take a part in some stupid manifestation on account of two students who have been sent away by the police. They talk of arranging a procession from the Vauxhall, near the railway station, to the Governor's house, and there to break all his window panes. Real boys, are they not? And to propose such a thing to me!"

The twilight did not allow Volodia to see the mocking smile that played round Dmitry's lips as he remembered the delight with which Volodia had spent several days in the society of these same boys not so long ago. The younger brother rode on, laughing softly, while the elder stopped to arrange something at his bridle. Suddenly a flash was seen in the copse on the left side of the way, and Dmitry

felt something like a heavy may-bug sweep past his ear. His horse started forward.

"What's the matter? Did they fire at you?" cried Volodia aghast.

"I think so; but, thank God, I am perfectly safe."

Volodia wanted to alight and search the copse, in which he fancied he heard some slight rustling, but Dmitry prevented him.

"Are you mad?" he cried. "It was a double-barrelled gun; they would kill you like a partridge among those bushes. Come along; perhaps we'll meet some people on the road farther on."

And, in fact, through the evening stillness, some voices were audible in the distance.

"Probably the labourers, who are returning after their day's work at Nikolsky," said Dmitry, after a moment's silence. "Go on, Volodia, that mamma may not be frightened, if she should hear of this from others. I'll remain here with the peasants and try to find the culprit."

In the meantime Anna Grigorievna had been sitting in the drawing-room with Nadia, who was nervously listening to every sound, and hardly able to suppress the signs of her mental anguish. The room was dimly lit up with a dull glass lamp; empty cups were standing on the table, and the samovar had not yet been removed, in expectation of the young gentlemen's return. Anna Grigorievna was playing patience, silently laying out her cards; but

Nadia observed that her hands were shaking—a very rare occurrence with the strong old lady.

"Failed for the tenth time!" she cried, throwing away her cards impatiently, and leaning back in her armchair.

"Did you not hear something?" she suddenly exclaimed, starting up, and listening to some far-off noise.

"No, I did not, dear aunt," Nadia answered shivering, for her aunt's question had awakened alarming thoughts within her.

"I thought I heard a shot," said the old lady, again sitting down; "but I may have been mistaken. I have such roaring sounds in my ears to-day; the air is so close; we are going to have a thunderstorm, I daresay."

"Her nerves are unstrung," thought Nadia, "for the air is light and perfumed with the freshness of the night."

Suddenly a horse's gallop resounded on the gravel, and after a moment's pause, the excited voice of Volodia, inquiring after his mother, was heard in the ante-room.

"Mamma, don't be frightened," he exclaimed, rushing into the drawing-room; "I have been sent here to quiet you."

These words roused the worst fears of Anna Grigorievna.

"What's the matter? Where's Dmitry?" she

cried, starting up. "Something has happened to him, I know; speak out."

Nadia, as pale as death, had also risen, and was standing motionless, in an agony of alarm.

"Dearest mamma, don't be frightened. Dmitry is not wounded; nothing has happened to him."

"What? has he been shot at?" cried the two women at the same time.

"Yes; a shot was fired at him in the hollow from behind the branches; but he was not hit, I tell you."

And he hurried up to his mother, who had fallen heavily back in her armchair. Nadia also approached her, moving unconsciously, as if being pushed onwards by invisible hands.

"This is Neradovitch's doing," she whispered to Volodia.

"How so? Is he still here?"

"Yes; I saw him to-day."

Anna Grigorievna heard this whisper; it made her start up out of her trance.

"What! you saw this man!" she exclaimed indignantly, placing herself resolutely before the young girl. "You are intimate with the murderer of my son!"

Volodia tried in vain to soothe her, telling her that no one knew who had fired the shot, that Nadia was perfectly innocent of all.

"Leave me alone," she cried; "I know what I say.

She lives in my house, eats my bread, and keeps up her intercourse with these people!"

Nadia covered her face with her hands.

"Aunt, dearest aunt!" she cried, sobbing, without saying a word in her own defence. She was ready to sink into the earth with the crushing feeling of her guilt and shame.

"Yes, now I know you," continued Anna Grigorievna; "you have been the cause of these riotings; you knew that Neradovitch was lingering in this neighbourhood, knew all the plans of this former teacher of yours,—who knows if not more than teacher?"

"Mamma, how can you?" cried Volodia.

Nadia was unable to pronounce a single word.

"No; it is time for her to hear the whole truth. I know now where you have been spending your days. To live upon charity in a strange house, and to go on plotting with the enemies of this house—oh, this is shameful, disgusting! Go away, out of my sight for ever; never dare to appear before me any more."

Nadia turned away, walking slowly towards the doors opening on the terrace; before reaching them, however, she stopped suddenly, saying in a trembling voice,—

"Where's Dmitry? Why is he not here?"

"He is coming directly; he sent me on before."

"How do you dare mention his name in my hear-

ing?" cried Anna Grigorievna. But at the same moment, fancying she had detected an irresolute ring in Volodia's voice, a strange doubt overcame her. She breathed hard, and her eyes started out of her head.

"You are deceiving me," she repeated several times.

"No, mamma; no, I assure you."

But all was in vain. She paced the room up and down, wringing her hands in despair, sending ten times for Terenty, to order him to go and look for the young barine, and wanting to rouse all the servants in the house. Nadia had gone out on the terrace, and her violent sobbing was audible in the stillness of the night. Anna Grigorievna had already forgotten all about her, and the young girl felt so utterly miserable that she was unable to take in the full offence conveyed in the abusive words of her aunt.

Thus a whole hour passed. Nadia, unable to listen any longer to the wailings of her aunt, who rushed about from one corner of the room to the other, praying and pleading aloud, walked down into the garden, and hid herself in the deep shade of the old lime trees, where neither the voices of men nor the rays of the moon could penetrate. But even the fresh, silent night did not soothe her; it only served to awaken the dormant feeling of heartache at the unjust reproaches of her aunt. It was past midnight when Dmitry at last returned. On hearing his voice on the staircase, Anna Grigorievna for the first time

realized that he was alive and not wounded. She hurried up to him, pressing him long and tenderly in her arms.

"It is nothing, mamma," he exclaimed gaily; "nothing at all. I am not only quite well, but have even caught the culprit."

"Neradovitch?" asked Volodia.

"Oh, no; it was none but Gondsevsky himself. I sent the peasants whom we met on the road to search the whole copse. They did it thoroughly, and even willingly, on hearing that I suspected the Pole. They now hate him, because it was he who urged them on to revolt. Three of the peasants were sent to the post-house, while I galloped on to wake Akime himself. He first refused to help me, but I threatened him with the law. The labourers in the courtyard declared they had seen Gondsevsky walk out with a gun in his hand. We went into his room, and found a ball-cartridge under his bed. The peasants soon joined us, and he himself arrived half an hour later. He was allowed to enter the gateway, after which they fell upon him, tying his hands and feet, and wrenching the gun from him. He was so completely taken aback that he did not even think of defending himself, but surrendered freely. He was then taken to his room, and his gun examined: both barrels had been loaded; one alone was empty. Yet he did not confess; but after half an hour, two men came back from the copse with a

silver cigar-box with his initials engraved on it, which he had dropped between the branches. 'What do you say to this?' I asked him. First he denied all, then he grew furious, accusing me of blackening his good name. At last we shut him up in his room, and appointed two men to watch over him till morning. As the examining magistrate was not to be had at once, I sent for the volost elder."

A short silence ensued. They were all in a state of high excitement.

"So it was not Neradovitch, after all," said Volodia.

"Neradovitch! Why on earth do you think of him?"

"Nadia thought so, for she met him to-day."

"Again! Does he still hide here? Will poor Nadia never know any peace from him?"

"What! you pity her?" cried Anna Grigorievna; "if she is intimate with these people, she is good for nothing herself."

"Is it really you, mamma, who speak in this way?" asked Dmitry, hardly trusting his ears.

She told him all that had passed between her and Nadia. Dmitry was in despair.

"How could you offend her thus, mamma? Poor child! Where is she, Volodia?"

"She must be in the garden."

Without listening to the indignant protests of his mother, Dmitry hurried out on the terrace, trying to pierce the darkness, in order to discover her white

dress. The house threw large shadows on the gravel walk, and in the background the wavering moonbeams trembled on the leaves. Nadia was nowhere to be seen. Dmitry walked down into the garden, penetrating deeper into the shady part of it. From afar off he espied a white form reclining in a death-like swoon on the old wooden bench in the dense lime-alley; her face was bathed in tears.

"Nadia, darling. Poor child! what's the matter?" he whispered, sitting down beside her.

"You!" she cried joyously, starting up and recovering her senses. "You, indeed! you are not wounded, are you?"

"You were uneasy about me, dearest, you who have had to bear such undeserved reproaches?"

Her heart beat tumultuously on hearing these words, though she did not fully understand that this man, who was so madly in love with her, did not even wish her to defend herself.

"No, they were not undeserved; they were just," she said, without looking into his face. "I am guilty towards you; I tried to hide from you that it was Neradovitch whom I met in the wood."

"Well, Nadia, I confess that I guessed as much."

The gay tone of his voice struck strangely on her ears.

"Guessed! and you did not enforce an entire confession from me!" and her eyes, now raised to his,

expressed the deepest gratitude. "But you don't know all: he wanted me to become his confederate in your house—his spy! And yet I dared not reveal it to you. A stupid dread of the consequences if I spoke and an exaggerated idea of my duties towards this man, tied my tongue, while he remained here, inciting the peasants to revolt under the false name of Efime Petroff.

"What! Efime Petroff and Neradovitch one and the same person?" exclaimed Dmitry, bewildered. "Impossible! Oh, how glad Peter Nicolaievitch will be to hear who the peasant was he whom admired so greatly!"

"And can you really forgive me, in spite of all of which I have been the cause? This man is capable of anything, Dmitry. Oh, if I had only suspected this! He might have killed you to-night."

She shivered, and covered her face with her hands.

"But it was not he who fired at me; it was Gondsevsky. So, you see, you need not upbraid yourself. I am in no danger, but you are; and we must try and deliver you out of the power of these people, for they will never forgive you."

He took hold of both her hands, drawing her fondly towards him.

"You have broken entirely with them, Nadia, have you not? and you don't regret having done it for my sake?"

"No, no," she whispered, shaking her head.

How could he ask? Her confession was made, and Anna Grigorievna forgiven and forgotten. She felt so light and happy, as if a load had been taken off her shoulders. Sweetly and shyly the consciousness of Dmitry's love stole into her heart.

A dense and dark foliage surrounded them with impenetrable walls; the night itself seemed to watch over them, defending them with its deep stillness and peace. Milkwhite spots of moonlight softly fell on the soil through the apertures of the lime boughs; a drowsy breeze stirred the branches like a surging sea; the lime trees seemed to whisper over their heads, and the air to keep back its breath. Sparkling glow-worms gleamed in the grass, and a lovely butterfly fluttered down on a drooping flower. Dmitry and Nadia felt perfectly happy in this deep stillness of the night; tenderness and peace emanated from it, flowing over into their hearts, as if the night itself whispered to them how insignificant were all human troubles compared to the one great truth of life, the one sole eternal joy of earth—the truth and joy of mutual love.

"I know that you are mine for ever," he said, drawing her nearer to him.

Nadia let her head fall on Dmitry's shoulder; her hair touched his cheek; another short moment and their lips met in a long and passionate kiss. The very greatness of this happiness, however, seemed

to frighten her, for she suddenly started up, whispering,—

"Come, Dmitry, let us go; it is late."

They walked out of the dense canopy of the old lime trees. The moon was already standing high in the sky, throwing floods of silvery light over the garden. The house alone remained, like a dark vision, buried in the shade. Nadia seemed to be under the influence of a great dread. The trees, with their black branches standing sharply out against the evening sky, wore a threatening look in her eyes. Even the cold, dazzling light of the full moon shining down upon her from such unattainable heights awoke within her a nameless awe, as if the pale, quiet luminary were an inexorable judge.

Dmitry, on the contrary, gave himself up to such perfect joy as is seldom felt on earth.

"Well, Nadia," he said, without letting go her hand, "I shan't allow those people to molest you any more; to-morrow I'll put a stop to this. Your peace won't be disturbed again.

"What are you going to do?" she asked anxiously.

He understood the thoughts she did not express.

"Don't trouble about it," he answered tenderly; "I shall settle all in such a way that no reproach will fall on you. They are not in reality as dangerous as you fancy. I shall try and get them to leave this place."

But though she thanked him tenderly for this proof

of his love, the young girl could not get rid of the awful fear which had taken possession of her. She could not believe that sorrow and grief had left her for ever.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ANNA GRIGORIEVNA passed a sleepless night. Her injustice towards Nadia weighed on her mind. She had spoken harshly to her, because she could not forgive her her intimacy with those whom she looked upon as her son's murderers. In this she had been mistaken; but did it make Nadia less guilty? She had seen Neradovitch; and who could say that she had not been told of Gondsevsky's plan beforehand? But an inward voice protested against these insinuations. When she had taken Nadia into her house, she had known of her relations with Neradovitch, had seen how heavily they weighed on her, how ardently she wished to get rid of them. She had not watched over her as closely as she ought to have done, had even treated her with studied coldness of late. Might not this change in their relations have contributed to drive her back into her confederate's arms? And now she had accused her falsely, and upbraided her with living upon charity. These thoughts kept her awake the whole night, and the morning dawn creeping stealthily in

through the closed shutters found her still in the uncertainty whether she ought to ask her forgiveness or not. There was, besides, another consideration which filled her with alarm. Nadia, instead of defending herself in her old imperious way, had only showed a deep-felt, passionate anguish for Dmitry, and Dmitry himself had defended the young girl in fiery words, and shown how angry he was with his mother. These were facts to which she could not shut her eyes.

The next morning, as soon as she entered the breakfast-room, Dmitry appeared at the door. He asked her to take the first step towards peace-making, and told her quite frankly that she had treated Nadia so unkindly of late that the poor girl did not know what to do.

Anna Grigorievna listened silently, trying to guess the hidden meaning of his quiet words.

"You can't condemn her for not betraying her former friends; this rather deserves our respect," he said.

"Did you know of her meeting Neradovitch?"

"I guessed it, at least, but did not wish to enforce her confession, knowing it would come, sooner or later."

He spoke more and more warmly, pointing out to her why he had never doubted the young girl. She was now convinced of the injustice of her suspicions, but she felt equally sure of his being in love with her.

"Tell me one thing quite frankly, Dmitry," she

said, getting up, and looking straight into his eyes. "You are in love with Nadia, but you don't reflect upon the consequences of this, and you can't go on behaving like a love-sick boy at your age; it is quite ridiculous."

"I have weighed all the consequences, mamma," he answered quietly and firmly, "and Nadia will be my wife."

"You talk of this marriage as a perfectly natural thing."

"Because I never doubted your giving your consent for a single moment."

"Did you really fancy this would please me?" she asked, hardly able to master her excitement. "Either you don't care whether you pain your old mother or not, or you intend marrying without my consent."

"Why do you say this? You know me too well."

"Marry whom you like," she cried, in a white heat of indignation, "but I shall certainly never bless such a wretched marriage."

"You only talk thus because she is a poor, portionless orphan, I daresay."

"'Portionless!'" she repeated, stopping before him. "How little you know me. If you are satisfied with a poor bride, I shall certainly not claim a rich daughter-in-law; my fortune is sufficient for both yours and Volodia's wants. Take a portionless bride. I shan't object; though I confess that now Elena is free——"

"What!" he exclaimed, laughing at the unexpected mention of Elena's name; "but you forget that ten years ago you refused your consent."

"I shall always regret it. If poor, she was, at least, the daughter of an honourable man."

"Honourable!" Dmitry shouted; "nice sort of honour!"

"I should never have been obliged to blush for such a daughter-in-law, at least," she went on, without minding his interruption; "she did not leave her father's home to go and live with a whole gang of vagabonds."

"Mamma! How can you?"

"No; you ought to hear the whole truth. You fancy I shall consent to take into my family a girl who learnt all sorts of abominations at Moscow, and who, when she went abroad——"

"I answer for Nadia as for myself."

"All lovers talk in this way. No sort of a shadow ought to fall on your bride; and I am ashamed to hear you talk thus."

She paced the room in a fever of excitement.

"This is my reward for taking a strange girl into my house. Why did I ever meddle with her?" she cried despairingly.

"And now you are going to thrust her out into the street. She may perish, provided your self-love be not wounded."

"And you say this to me, Dmitry?" said Anna

Grigorievna, aghast. "I never thrust any one out into the streets, and shan't begin with your Nadia, believe me."

"If you will promise to treat her kindly, I'll wait patiently till time shows you the injustice of your judgment; till then I'll go away, to avoid any family dissension."

"You'll go away!" she cried; but she could not say any more; light steps were heard outside the door.

"May I come in, dear aunt?" asked Nadia's voice.

"Wait a moment," answered her aunt; "I'll see you somewhat later. So you intend to go away? That's what you have determined?"

"And you promise me to treat her kindly? Remember she is without a protector."

"I never forget a promise; trust me," she answered, opening the door to let in Nadia. Dmitry greeted her, and walked away.

"How glad I am that you came yourself," said Anna Grigorievna, sitting down before her writing-table; "I was coming to you. I wronged you last night; do forgive me."

She spoke with a visible effort; then, suddenly drawing her niece towards her, kissed her on the brow, as of old.

"I offended you deeply, my darling," she said in a tender voice, such as Nadia had not heard for long.

"No, no, auntie. Don't make any excuses. I did not come to talk yesterday over with you."

Her voice broke down, and Anna Grigorievna gazed wonderingly at her pale face.

"I have come to ask you to allow me to leave you," she went on, steadying her voice.

"What! You want to go away, even after I have asked your forgiveness?"

"You don't understand me, dearest aunt," said Nadia, with a shake of her head. "It is not wounded self-love which prompts me; yet I cannot remain any longer under your roof."

"Why not? And where are you going?"

"Don't trouble about me; I'll find my way for myself. I should like to leave to-morrow. Can you give me horses to get to the town?"

"So you really want to go?" said Anna Grigorievna rising, "and you think I shall allow you to go? No, no, we won't hear of this; you would not return to your father, I know, and I can't give you up to all the chances of such an isolated life."

"I shall look out for work."

"Work! This eternal dream of youth!" exclaimed the old lady, with increasing vehemence. "Don't be a fool, my dear; this seems very charming in the distance, but only think of the beginning. You would have to take furnished rooms, uncomfortable, dreary rooms,—you, so young, so delicate-looking. Believe me, this is impossible."

Nadia listened silently to her aunt's words, her shaking hands alone betraying her excitement.

"But tell me why you want to leave me, if you are not angry with me. Do you feel dull here?"

"Don't ask me," answered Nadia, with a great effort. "Believe me, it will be better for all of us if I leave."

When Nadia had opened her eyes on that morning, the bright sunshine which overflooded her room had shown her her position in quite a different light. The dreams which had visited her in the dead of night disappeared, and the rays of the morning sun told her mercilessly that these dreams could not be. How could she become Dmitry's wife without provoking a total estrangement between mother and son? She knew the unbending will of her aunt, and did not expect her ever to give her consent to this marriage. But, even supposing her to give way, ought she not herself to refuse to enter a family which would always consider her an impostor? Her pride ought to prevent her accepting a consent granted only out of pity. No, no; she must hide her love in the depths of her heart. She would sacrifice herself, and leave Biälastolby; the quicker this was done, the better. No feeling of having been deeply offended by her aunt existed within her; she had fully and freely forgiven her. What did those paltry sufferings signify compared to that great passionate martyrdom which would be her lot on earth? So she took the

resolution of leaving the house on the following day. Anna Grigorievna knew the real reason of her wanting to get away, but she was resolved not to accept this sacrifice.

"No, my dear," she said, in a trembling voice, "I shan't let you go. Don't tell me why you wish to leave,—perhaps I know already; but, whatever it be, it is not sufficient in my eyes. I promised your father to watch over you as long as you were not married, and my promise remains holy in my sight."

It was no easy thing to get Nadia to consent to stay, but at last an inward voice corroborated her aunt's words; and who knows whether a faint hope did not rise within her breast, telling her that time is our best confederate.

"When you get older, my dear, you will understand that you ought never to take a sudden resolution. Promise me to remain here for another week, and then we shall see. All will come right, though perhaps not exactly as we expect it."

These somewhat enigmatical words sounded like a promise in Nadia's ears. She granted her aunt her request, and then left her.

Anna Grigorievna remained long, sitting before her *écritoire*, reviewing in her mind all the details of her conversations with Dmitry and Nadia. It seemed to her as if some secret power were pushing her onwards along a road which she did not want to tread. But could she have acted otherwise, and not asked Nadia

to stay? Involuntarily she bent down before the young girl's spirit of self-immolation. Time, she thought, will settle all; but it was the first time in her life that she had taken refuge in this hopeless solution of life's riddles.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

DMITRY had in the meantime gone down to the village to have an explanation with Brushkoff. In the hollow he met the volost elder in his telega.

"You sent for me?" the latter asked, with the air of a man who has no idea why he is wanted.

"Did you hear what happened here yesterday evening?"

"Yes; the insolent wretch!"

"He is shut up in the post-house; but I wanted you to take him to prison, and keep him there until the trial commences."

"Don't be uneasy; he won't get off," answered the elder, with a self-satisfied air.

"Here is an important proof," said Dmitry, producing a small bullet out of his pocket; "three of my workmen searched the hollow this morning, and found this."

"Please show it to me," said the man, weighing the little bullet on his palm.

"I'll keep it for the trial," said Dmitry, putting it back again in his pocket. "Well, and about our talk of the other day; have no suspicious persons appeared here in the neighbourhood?"

"Absolutely none. We have searched the whole district in vain. There is one person whom we don't know, it is true, called Efime; but his passport is in perfect order."

"Ah!" said Dmitry, smiling at the self-confidence of the elder; "and this Efime is a machinist, is he not?'

"Yes; a clever workman. He lodges with an old soldier, whose brother, named Pakhom, once went away, leaving his land behind him, which was given to the soldier. Efime now lives in his hut. He is a most clever and promising young man, I assure you."

"Yes, yes," answered Dmitry, with difficulty suppressing a burst of laughter; "thanks for your pains. Now please go and take care of Gondsevsky."

The elder bowed, turning his telega in the direction of the post-house.

Dmitry found Brushkoff at his favourite turning-lathe.

"What do you want, sir?" he asked, rising and handing Dmitry a chair.

"Thanks, I shan't sit down; our explanation will be very short, and lead to an understanding between us, I trust."

Brushkoff wondered at the tone in which these words were said.

"You will please go to my office," continued Dmitry, "where your wages till the 1st of August will be paid out to you; you are discharged, and will leave Biälastolby to-day.

"Thank you very much, Dmitry Alexandrovitch; but I trust you will explain the reason of this most extraordinary behaviour."

"The reason is very simple," answered Dmitry, in a cold and constrained voice; "I consider your presence here unseemly, on account of the part you took in the peasants' riots."

"Oh, I see; I owe this to your cousin, Nadeshda Serg——"

"Please not to forget yourself, Mr. Brushkoff," said Dmitry, with difficulty mastering his anger. The fold between his eyes deepened; the cane which he held in his hand moved a little. It was a costly reed, with a small leaden cluster, instead of a cane-head.

"And please not to forget that you are here in my room, Mr. Koretzky; but if you will go out with me——"

"Never mind; only remember that to-morrow you must have left, not only Biälastolby, but even the neighbourhood."

"What do you mean by this rather vague expression?"

"You understand me very well," answered Dmitry impatiently; "go wherever you like, but if you are seen in this neighbourhood after to-morrow——"

"Well?"

"The consequences might be rather unpleasant for you."

Saying this he approached the door.

"And now I have another request to make of you," he added, putting on his hat; "please to tell your friend, Mr. Neradovitch, that I advise him to disappear as quickly as possible."

Brushkoff's face had a look of blank astonishment.

"Don't act a part, I tell you; your intimacy with Neradovitch, *alias* the machinist Efime, is too well known to me."

"Then I advise you to discharge this machinist yourself. It would be much easier, I think."

"I do not want to have anything to do with him; but he will soon learn that I am in full earnest, if you don't warn him betimes."

Dmitry turned to leave the room, but at that very moment the door was thrown open, and Neradovitch himself appeared. On seeing Dmitry, the supposed machinist doffed his cap, and bowed low; yet their eyes met, and they gazed unflinchingly at each other, struck with this sudden meeting.

"You told me just now that you did not know Mr. Neradovitch," said Dmitry, turning towards Brushkoff, and crossing his arms on his breast.

Neradovitch gazed for one moment at Brushkoff, as if wishing to guess what had taken place between them.

"I never denied that I knew Mr. Efime," said the schoolmaster quietly.

A deep silence reigned for some moments in the

room. Dmitry and Neradovitch struggled in vain to hide the signs of the hatred which filled their hearts.

"I charged Brushkoff to tell you that I order you to leave this place to-morrow morning at the latest," said Dmitry, gazing straight at his enemy.

Neradovitch answered submissively, in the peculiar jargon of the peasants.

"Give up this hateful comedy. I know who you are, know what you have been contriving here; if ever you dare to show your face here again, I shall know what I have to do. Do you understand?"

Neradovitch turned deadly pale, his eyes flashed indignantly, but he strove to keep his composure.

"I don't understand you; of course you know who I am, the machinist Petroff. You are dissatisfied with my work, perhaps?"

"Oh, you may try and copy the peasants as much as you like; you will never be able to talk like one of them," cried Dmitry. "Now go; if you are still here to-morrow, I'll tell you my mind." He seized him by the shoulder, pushing him towards the door.

"Now, the deuce!" cried Neradovitch, thrusting his hand into his pocket.

Dmitry saw this movement, and as soon as the revolver was out of the pocket, he struck him a violent blow with the head of his cane. His hand grew scarlet with pain, but did not drop the revolver. Dmitry started forward, and caught hold of his

elbow. Neradovitch had just succeeded in shifting the pistol to the other hand, when Brushkoff threw himself on him to keep his hand down.

"Are you mad?" he cried. "Do you want people to hear the shot? Give me the pistol directly."

Dmitry forced Neradovitch back with both hands, and held him firmly down, not allowing him to move.

"Take care," he cried to Brushkoff, who succeeded in springing aside, after having caught hold of his friend's elbow.

"Give me the revolver, I tell you! What has become of your much-praised coolness?"

For a few moments Neradovitch, perfectly maddened, tried to free himself, but Dmitry held him as in an iron screw, and nothing remained to him but to drop the revolver.

"Here, take it, if you side with him," he said angrily, addressing Brushkoff.

"Now you are no longer in danger of a tragical end, it seems, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," said Brushkoff, raising the pistol from the floor; "in my hands this weapon is not dangerous at all."

Dmitry now let Neradovitch loose. In the first moment of his rage, he turned as if to throw himself again on his rival, but feeling his helplessness, he remained where he was.

A short, hardly audible laugh of Brushkoff's only increased his fury.

"Don't forget my words," said Dmitry; "I advise you to do as I told you."

He walked towards the door; then turning round to Brushkoff, he added,—

"Don't forget to come to the office for your money."

"No fear of that; I dote on the golden metal."

As soon as Dmitry left the room, Neradovitch turned upon Brushkoff, exclaiming wildly,—

"If it had not been for you, I should have killed him."

"Do you feel a special longing for the gallows, then?"

"Whoever fears the gallows is not fit to work with me."

"Keep your heroism for another occasion, when your hatred does not speak so loudly. The death of one landed proprietor in Russia won't make a great difference to our work."

These words, which proved Brushkoff's moral superiority, served to restore to Neradovitch his entire self-possession. He felt that in order to rule others it is necessary to remain quiet and cool.

"We have but one day before us; let us profit by it," he said.

"Yes, to scamper away as quickly as possible. Do you really believe in Koretzky's generosity?"

"I know whom I can trust; you can't teach me anything. I am going to stay here; at least just now."

"As you like; I, for my part, am going to the railroad."

"Fool! Idiot! You are running straight into the arms of the police. Far better to leave us, and to sue for some clerk's place in a justice court."

Brushkoff, in the meanwhile, did not lose time: he took out a carpet-bag, and emptying all his drawers, crammed their contents into it.

"I am ready to sacrifice myself entirely to our work," he said, "but certainly not solely to please a whim of yours. Much good you will do in these few hours, I dare say."

"We shall see; but you, my dear fellow, will never get on in the world, I tell you."

Saying this, Neradovitch left the room, and walked quickly on towards the post-house.

## CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Dmitry returned home, he was much astonished to see a gendarme posted at the foot of the stairs. Terenty explained to him that he had come on the box with the attorney-general and the ispravnik, who had arrived a few hours ago. Dmitry entered the drawing-room, where Anna Grigorievna was vainly trying to entertain her unwelcome guests. She looked flushed and excited, and Boroffsky, who had not been to Biälastolby since the day on which he was refused by Nadia, was ill at ease and gloomy. He seemed to freeze the very air he breathed ; and when he explained, in his cold and stately way, what business had brought him to Biälastolby, Anna Grigorievna curtly told him to wait for the arrival of her elder son, as she did not understand what he wanted. Under these conditions conversation remained cold and distant, in spite of the efforts which the ispravnik made. He put in some well-made speeches about his hostess's health, about the peasants' riots, and at last about the abyss of wickedness which his official position often obliged him to unveil in houses where no one had ever suspected anything to be wrong.

Anna Grigorievna raised her shawl, which had dropped from her shoulders, but remained obstinately silent; her look only seemed to say, "I know what you hint at!"

"Your niece, I trust," he continued, with some embarrassment, "has not——"

"I told you once before that I answer for Nadia," she interrupted him sharply; "so I suppose your insinuations are directed towards me."

The name of Nadia was hardly pronounced before Boroffsky's face assumed a stony expression.

"As for that which happened yesterday evening, we shall take the most severe measures," the ispravnik began again. "What awful times we live in!"

Boroffsky turned his cold eyes upon him.

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch has taken the necessary measures himself," he said, in a mocking tone; "so you see that no energy is wanted here."

When Dmitry entered the room, his mother addressed him immediately.

"Nicholas Ossipovitch has some communication to make to you," she said.

Dmitry greeted her two guests very coldly.

"I was rather astonished, I confess," he said, "to see such a very strange guest at my door."

"His presence here will be of very short duration," answered Boroffsky, "if you condescend to give us the necessary information."

Dmitry looked at him, waiting for any further communication.

"You heard me say in town that we had discovered the traces of a man calling himself Aladdin, one of the worst ringleaders. This man evidently did not feel safe, for he sent one of his confederates, a certain Goldstein, to Simbirsk, under his own name, but with a false passport. This man, I am told, has entirely disappeared from that town, leaving no traces behind. As for the first Aladdin, he has been seen lately at a post-house near to this place, where he has been buying and selling horses. This statement has been corroborated by your own coachman, who happened to see him there during the town elections."

"What!" exclaimed Anna Grigorievna, "you have dared to examine my coachman, have you?"

"The ispravnik has been putting a few quite informal questions to him," Boroffsky answered, smiling; "and, thanks to him, we have learned all we wanted to know. The man of the post-house spent ten days here, dressed as a machinist, under the name Efime Petroff. We have every reason to believe that he is the great culprit Neradovitch."

On hearing this hated name, a sort of mysterious dread overcame Anna Grigorievna. Not that she wished Neradovitch to escape; on the contrary, she would have been delighted to hear of his being arrested; but the cold firmness with which Boroffsky seemed to pursue some unknown aim filled her with

a nameless awe. There was some devilish wickedness lurking in his eyes, which seemed to threaten others besides Neradovitch.

The ispravnik listened to this explanation with the absent smile of a man who deems it very tiresome and superfluous to talk in this way before ladies.

"Efime Petroff has, indeed, worked a few days here," said Dmitry, "after which he was paid off; but I can't understand of what use I can be to you in this affair."

"Very easy to explain, Dmitry Alexandrovitch; you might help us to catch Efime Petroff."

"Excuse me," said Dmitry, flashing out, "I am no catchpole, thank God."

"You are perfectly mistaken; I only want you to tell me whether or not you know where this man lives."

"I tell you that he has been paid off, and that I know nothing of him, except that he is a peasant from the district of Khavalinsky."

Boroffsky smiled.

"Yes; still you know as well as I do that he is no peasant at all."

"I confess that it never interested me to speculate on his being or not being a peasant."

"Not even when I tell you that it was he who incited your peasants and those of Nikolsky, and that he had a hand in the riotings on the president's estate?"

Anna Grigorievna listened with increasing nervousness. So this had been the activity of Neradovitch here; and Nadia, knowing of this, had hidden it from her and Dmitry!

"Don't be uneasy," said the ispravnik; "the riots will soon be at an end, and we are sure of catching Neradovitch in a short time."

"Perhaps it is already done," said Dmitry; "but you seem to forget that I have neither soldiers under my command, nor do I possess any special police scent."

"You seem to forget your prowess of yesterday evening," said Boroffsky, smarting under the contemptuous ring of Dmitry's tone; "when you arrested Gondsevsky, you showed yourself in possession of a propensity peculiar to Russian noblemen in general—that of being their own judge."

"You will then perhaps be kind enough to tell me how to catch a criminal without offending the law, until one of the numerous but mostly invisible representatives of State authority appears. Or do you fancy my eloquence would be sufficient to keep Gondsevsky with me until you came?"

Boroffsky fidgeted a little in his chair, trying to give an air of condescending interest to his face.

"You quite forget all the worries which may be the result of your deed. There may be times when it is better to look through your fingers."

"Especially when you are fired at from behind a

tree," laughed Dmitry. "Do you generally follow this rule in your capacity of attorney-general?"

"What are you going to do now?" asked Boroffsky, turning a deaf ear to this question. "Sustain a sensational law-suit, in the course of which you risk hearing very unpleasant truths? No; give up the whole thing; that's my advice to you. Do you know what the governor would say, if he talked the affair over with you? He would hint at the great inconvenience which would be the result of it from an administrative point of view, at the high-flown speeches, biting remarks, and malevolent observations of the different newspapers. 'How could you, Dmitry Alexandrovitch,' he would probably say, 'an enlightened man, happen to have such an unpleasant occurrence on your estate?'"

"Yet, in spite of all the unpleasantness which might ensue for the authorities, I shall send in my complaint to-day."

"Just as you like; only allow me to wonder at your harshness towards Gondsevsky, when you refuse so decidedly to help us to catch a much worse criminal."

Dmitry frowned, and his smile disappeared as he answered,—

"I don't know what you mean."

"You really want me to believe that you don't know who this Efime is."

"I think we had better put a stop to these recriminations," said Dmitry. "First, you accuse me of

being too vindictive, and now you seem to hint at my being in a sort of connivance with one of the worst ringleaders of to-day. Amfili Nikandrovitch," he added, turning to the ispravnik, "if you intend to begin your work here, our house is quite at your disposal. I'll order paper and pens to be brought here."

The ispravnik started.

"What!" he cried, "make a search here; oh, no. We won't trouble Anna Grigorievna. I might put a few questions to some of the peasants; could I not, Nicholas Ossipovitch?"

"This is your business, not mine," answered Boroffsky coldly; "as long as the identity of Efime Petroff is not ascertained, I have nothing to do; it is you and your gendarme who are to work here."

"Don't be uneasy," answered the ispravnik, somewhat ruffled at the hidden raillery of Boroffsky's words. "I have fulfilled my duties for ten years, and shall certainly succeed in identifying this Efime Petroff, the more so as I possess a photo of Neradovitch; so, if you allow," he added, turning to Anna Grigorievna, "I'll leave you now, and go on with my business. And you, Nicholas Ossipovitch," he asked of Boroffsky, "will you return to town with my horses?"

Boroffsky only bent his head, and, sitting down near Anna Grigorievna, did not breathe another word about the business which had brought him to Biälas-

tolby; it had entirely ceased to exist for him; but his face kept its official harsh expression.

Ten minutes later, he got up to take leave of her, without Nadia's name having been pronounced between them.

"Why did you not tell Boroffsky the whole truth about Neradovitch?" asked Anna Grigorievna, as soon as they were left alone. "You know where he lives, I daresay."

"I do; I learnt it through Nadia, but I am tied by the promise I gave." And he told her about their meeting in the school, only hiding from her the danger which had threatened his life. "I could not act otherwise on Nadia's account. Only fancy what she would have suffered, had she thought that her former master had been betrayed by her."

"So we saved Neradovitch in order not to pain Nadia," said Anna Grigorievna, with some bitterness. "Did you hear what Boroffsky said? Neradovitch has been here for a whole month, and Nadia knew about it. Well, I won't say anything; but I should like to know what would happen to her, should she leave our house. She would go to ruin; if not to-day then to-morrow."

"Therefore you ought to protect her, mamma; for you would not like her to be arrested, would you?"

"Do you think I want to thrust her out of my house, Mitia?" cried the old lady, vexed at the hidden

reproach of her son's words. "Oh, if you knew what pains I had to get her to stay here!"

And she repeated her conversation with Nadia to Dmitry, who listened in silence. He valued the self-sacrifice of both, for he knew how much it had cost his mother to ask Nadia to stay, and how sad their life would be under the present circumstances; yet he thanked the old lady most heartily for this respite.

The ispravnik returned for dinner with a brilliant appetite, but a rather crestfallen face. He had learnt nothing at all. The peasants all assured him that they knew Efime Petroff very well, but they were wisely silent about his instigations. Nor had the gendarme had greater luck. He had been sent for the volost elder and the clerk; but the former had driven into town about the time when Gondsevsky was arrested, and the latter was found in such a state of drunkenness that nothing was to be got out of him. So the ispravnik resolved to leave, and to return on the following day and take up the business again. This failure, however, did not weigh heavily on him; he ate and drank for two, courted Nadia, and sat down after dinner to a game of cards with Anna Grigorievna. Having won ten rubles from her, he drove away, about ten o'clock, in the highest of spirits.

## CHAPTER XX.

IT was about three o'clock in the morning when Terenty, having hastily thrust his feet in his slippers, groped his way through the dark corridors to the room of his young master.

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch, batushka," he whispered, hardly able to breathe, "we have——"

Dmitry, who had not been able to fall asleep, started up in his bed as soon as he heard Terenty's voice.

"What's the matter?" he asked, trying to pierce the darkness, as people always do when suddenly startled out of the dim visions of sleeplessness.

"Our barn is on fire!" Terenty whispered, in a terrified voice; "it must have been done——"

Dmitry rushed up to the window and tore open the shutters. Large, flaming tongues, starting out of the roof of the barn, were licking the dark night sky around it. The horizon trembled like fiery waves. Above their heads the full moon shone with a sad and pale light.

"It is the rye harvest," cried Dmitry; "run up to the starost; call the people together; let us, at least, try and save the large building."

"The starost is already on the place with his people, but nothing is to be done—it is only straw," he said, with the well-known pessimism of old servants.

"Well, let us do what we can," said Dmitry, hurrying on his clothes; "all is in order, for I told them this morning—— Now go, as quickly as you can."

Terenty shuffled downstairs; great haste was not his habit.

As soon as Dmitry was dressed, he went to wake his brother, who slept the sleep of the righteous. He started up in his bed.

"Be quiet," whispered Dmitry; "don't make a noise on mamma's account."

The whole house was already up, the maids were rushing about shrieking, as if a personal danger threatened them. This senseless fear exasperated Dmitry, and he ordered them rather sharply to hold their tongues and stay with their mistress, if she should wake up. In the ante-room he found the gardener, the coachman, and two boys, who, without knowing why, had run up to the house, and were now standing there, trembling all over, and widely opening their eyes.

The old housekeeper, Aniussa, was the only one who did not lose her head, though she was certainly more devoted to her masters than any one else in the house.

"What are you doing here, all of you?" cried

Dmitry, seizing his hat; "people are wanted at the fire; go down!"

"You are wrong to go, barine," said Aniussa.

"Do you think they will kill me?"

"Who knows? I think they are wicked enough for that."

"Then may God's will be done!" he said, leaving the house. "My goodness, the wind is rising!" he added, gazing at the sky.

The branches were indeed moving and rustling in the darkness, as if trembling with fear. Some light steps were audible on the stairs.

"Dmitry! where are you going? I beseech you, don't go!" cried Nadia, rushing up to him.

"What do you fear, my dear?—let me alone!"

She threw her arms around him.

"This is Neradovitch's doing!" she whispered.

"Yes; it is his thanks for the warning I gave him. But there is no time to be lost; let me go, darling."

"Then I'll go with you."

"No, indeed; you must stay behind and protect mamma."

He pushed her softly away; then, as if suddenly remembering something, he stopped, and seizing both her hands,—"Tell me, Nadia," he said, slowly and solemnly, "now that your former friends have passed from words unto deeds, have you discarded them for ever, and without regrets?"

"How can you ask, and just at this moment?" she

said, leaning her head on his breast; "do I not belong solely and entirely to you?"

He pressed her in his arms.

"Now, go up into your room; I confide my mother to your care," he said, hurrying after his brother, who was striding down to the fire as quickly as he could.

The bright sparkling flames, bursting out of the roof, threw a strange glare over the whole landscape, till now buried in the darkness of the night. A fiery light danced on the stone walls; the black surface of the lake was all ablaze with burning red. On the other shore the straw roofs and plastered walls of the huts were clearly lit up, as if huge red lanterns had been posted in the village; and in the background the white walls of the church looked like frightful spectres, wrapped in bloody shrouds.

"Why don't you pull down the nearest ricks?" asked Dmitry, as soon as he came, addressing the starost; "it is the only way of saving the rest. Don't direct the fire-engine on the flames, but on the places that are not yet burning; thus we may perhaps save something."

But no one moved to take up the work. Volodia wanted to ask somebody to help him, when Dmitry, foreseeing a failure, prevented him from speaking.

"Leave them alone," he said; "it is no business of theirs. They delight in seeing other people's property being destroyed."

There were twelve strange peasants from a neighbouring village in the crowd. They felt vexed at these words of Dmitry, and offered their help. It was gratefully accepted; and the water-spouts rose higher and higher, overflooding all with their showers. The face of one of these men suddenly struck Dmitry, and he recognised the old man who had shown him the way from the Volga to Tshornaïa Khutora.

"Pakhom," he cried, "how did you get here?"

"Do you know me, barine?" he said, with his own peculiar far-off gaze. "I came home to-day."

"But you did not get as far as Igris, did you?"

"No, I did not," answered Pakhom, with a sigh, while going steadfastly on with his work; "I was taken ill the day after I left you, and remained in the village hospital till yesterday. Now I fear very much that my strength won't suffice for any more wanderings. God did not vouchsafe to grant my prayer. Well, I can live without it. I am staying with my brother at Tshornaïa Khutora."

"I know, I know; but how can you work if you are ill?"

The starost now approached them, announcing that a fire-engine was coming from Nikolsky.

"Well, Philip," asked Dmitry, "have you no idea who can have done this piece of work? Do you suspect any one?"

"People say that no one can have done this but a man named Flegont—that fellow in the red shirt, who

never works and only drinks," answered Philip falteringly; "but perhaps he is here no longer."

"But he must have had some confederates," said Dmitry.

"If you wish, barine, I can tell you how it was done," said Pakhom.

The workmen pricked up their ears. Dmitry took the old man aside.

"When I returned home to-day," he began his narrative, "I found a man, called Efime, with my brother. He seemed to want to hide before me, and struck me as not being a real peasant. Whenever I mentioned the saints, he smiled in a contemptuous way. My brother told me that this Efime was a machinist from town, who lodged with him. As he has neither wife nor children, people are always glad to live in his house. Towards evening a peasant named Flegont Parfenoff came, and taking Efime apart, had a very long talk with him. My suspicions were immediately aroused, and on approaching them I heard Efime say, 'This will vex Dmitry Alexandrovitch very much.' This put me in mind of our meeting on the shores of the Volga. They broke off their conversation as they perceived me, and Efime soon after left the hut, but returned a moment later, as if having forgotten something. After taking up his cap, he again walked out into the street. I followed him stealthily, without his seeing me. It was late, the cocks having crowed long ago. The moon was high

in the heavens, so all was clearly lit up. I saw him emerge on the highroad, where Flegont and another man were waiting for him. I followed them to Biälastolby. When we reached the dike, one rick was already ablaze, so I rushed off to the farm and roused the people."

"Thank you, my good fellow, a thousand thanks," said Dmitry, slapping him on the shoulder.

In the meantime the steward had arrived from Nikolsky with the fire-engine.

"Oh, these people!" he cried. "It is the sixth fire I have seen in Russia! How can one get on with such men?"

"The chief thing is to save the rest of the corn, Christopher Karlovitch. What is to be done, do you think?" asked Dmitry.

"Well, we must try; but do look at these wretches standing idly about, while the wind is carrying the sparks directly towards the village."

At this moment, however, some of the peasants began to stir, and offered their help. It was nothing but self-preservation which prompted them, for the wind was rising higher and higher, and the sparks already reached the other shore of the lake.

In the crowd of spectators was a tall, broad-shouldered man, who always tried to retreat in the darkness, mingling only with those who were farthest away from the fire.

"Well, Flegont," said a peasant, addressing the

man who bore this name, there is nothing to be done with these people; after all, they are real blockheads."

"Blockheads, indeed," scoffed Flegont.

"It would be an easy thing to burn down the whole manor-house. Look, there is no one in its vicinity; they are all busy at the fire-engines."

"What a capital idea!" exclaimed Flegont, bending his head, and whispering something in his companion's ear.

They looked rather irresolutely at each other.

"But you must come with us, Efime," said Flegont, addressing the broad-shouldered man.

"No; such work had better be done without me."

"Yes; I see you have turned into a real old woman of late," answered Flegont, as he disappeared.

The rest of the crowd quickly dispersed, and Neravoditch, having remained behind, dived into the copse, in order to reach the other side of the lake in this way. Suddenly a red tongue flashed out of one of the peasants' huts, running along the thatched roof.

"There's a fire in the village," screamed a voice.

"What did I tell you, Dmitry Alexandrovitch?" said the steward. "Oh, those wretches!"

The crowd was in the wildest excitement, howling, shrieking, running to and fro. An old woman almost threw herself at Dmitry's feet, beseeching him to send the fire-engines down to the village to save their goods.

"Philip," he said to the starost, "take three of them to the village. The workmen can remain here with the others; there are plenty of people in the village."

The starost obeyed silently, though he did not agree with this arrangement.

"Well, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," said Christopher Karlovitch, "you are always sacrificing your property to the welfare of the peasants, though they are the cause of the fire."

"I only lose my grain, which I can do without," answered Dmitry, "while in the village they lose all they possess, if we do not help them; besides, the greatest danger for the barn is already past."

The flames were, in fact, slowly dying out, as there was no longer any fuel in the vicinity to keep up the fire; from time to time only some large sparks were seen flying upwards, as out of a burning crater. Dmitry had just reached the dike, when Nadia suddenly stood before him.

"Well done!" she cried, in an excited voice. "I thank you for it."

Her eyes flashed, and her curly hair was blown about her face.

"Why are you here?" he cried angrily. "I asked you to stay with mamma."

"Forgive me, but I could not; besides, she does not want me: both her maids are with her."

He was silent, and quickening their pace they hurried on towards the village. Amid the madden-

ing roar of human voices the light tinkle of a troïka's bells was audible. They had hardly reached the burning house before a tarantass overtook them.

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch! how did this happen?" cried Tomiline, jumping out of the carriage. "They waked me with the news that Biälastolby was on fire, and I hurried down as quickly as I could. How awful this will be for your poor mother!"

Awful, indeed! thought Dmitry. Not so much on account of the material loss, but because it was done by the peasants, over whom she has ruled so long and peacefully, in a sort of patriarchal way, in spite of the new order of things. And now those dreams of peace and concord are done with for ever!

And he himself, what failures had he experienced in those first days of his country life! How all his plans had been frustrated, all his hopes disappointed!

The fire, in the meantime, had destroyed the thatched roofs. They stood out like lighthouses against the dark sky, on which threatening clouds now entirely hid the moon. A heavy fog of smoke brooded over the village; a penetrating smell and suffocating heat pervaded the night air. The fire-engines arrived at last; but, in spite of the agonized appeals for help, the efforts to save the remaining buildings were made in such a helpless, senseless way that even the starost lost courage, and wondered

at Dmitry's sacrificing his own goods to help those who would not help themselves. Tomiline and Dmitry tried in vain to form a living chain from the lake to the fire-engine, for none liked to be near the fire, and many were unwilling to leave their own houses to protect those of their neighbours.

In the meantime the wind had abated, and soon ceased entirely; bright flashes of lightning illuminated the horizon, and the distant rollings of an approaching thunderstorm were audible.

"Well, these clouds might bring us help," said Tomiline, looking up at the threatening sky.

Suddenly the wailing of a horse, a thing never to be forgotten when once heard, was audible in one of the burning buildings.

"Alas!" cried an old woman, addressing the crowd, "is there no one here to save my poor little mare?"

"We have more important things to do than to save your beasts," said a peasant whose house had been burnt down.

"But she is our only treasure, batushka; you don't know how we toiled to earn enough to buy her."

No one moved, until Pakhom, who had been working very hard at the fire-engine, heard the woman's agonized entreaties.

"Where's your mare?" he asked.

"In there, batushka," she said, pointing to the

burning house, and saluting him very deeply. Listen; don't you hear her?"

"I'll save her," said Pakhom, quietly, as if he was doing the most natural thing in the world. But it was not so very easy a matter, after all. The roof had not been entirely removed, and great patches of burning straw were continually dropping down in the courtyard. Pakhom took off his cap, crossed himself most devoutly three times, and then passed the porch of the burning hut. The others gazed at him in silent wonder, keeping back their breath, and not daring to follow him. He crossed the courtyard safely, untied the rope with which the colt was fastened, and opened the door to the fold. Another frightened wailing of the horse was heard, then a great crash followed, the flames broke out with renewed strength, and the whole roof fell thundering down into the courtyard. At first no one understood what had happened: the burning beams of the roof had buried old Pakhom just as he had untied the grey horse. Dmitry, who was standing not far off, heard the crash, and rushed immediately to the rescue. He saw the formless, ruined walls, the black torrents of smoke soaring thickly out of the roof, as if saturated with the blood of its victims; but neither groans nor shrieks were heard there, where a human life had just ended.

"Why are you standing about like that?" he cried; "we must try and save him."

And he rushed forward, as if still hoping to tear the old man out of death's embrace. But no one followed him. All knew that it would be in vain; burning ruins never yet gave up their victims. Dmitry felt perfectly crushed. The kind old man had done his utmost to save Biälastolby, and had paid with his life for this service.

The violence of the fire now seemed to abate; the flaming waves quieted down; the help on which Tomiline had relied was drawing near—heavy raindrops began to pour down from the lowering clouds. The peasants again breathed freely. Their gratitude towards the barine produced a complete change in their feelings, and the expression of it resounded loudly and freely.

"Batushka, Dmitry Alexandrovitch!" suddenly exclaimed the frightened voice of the starost, "it seems as if your manor-house was on fire!"

Dmitry turned round. Small red tongues were licking the dark night sky.

"Yes, so it is!" he cried, and his thoughts immediately recurred to his mother.

"No, it is not," said the starost; "it is only the storehouse."

"The store-house! yes, indeed. Come, let us hurry back." And he rushed onwards, dragging Nadia with him. Tomiline ordered the fire-engines to follow as quickly as possible.

Anna Grigorievna had fallen into a deep slumber

after the last restless night she had had; even the noise in the house had not wakened her up. But it was no soothing slumber, granting her quiet and strength. A spectre was soon beckoning her on, soon settling down on her, preventing her from breathing. Dmitry and Nadia were standing before her, gazing at her with sad, reproachful looks, as if imploring her to protect them against some threatening danger. She tried to raise her hand, and suddenly an awful abyss gaped between them, out of which rose the spectre which had been tormenting her before. Little by little it took a human form, and she recognised the features of Boroffsky. He seemed to be gazing at her with a wicked, avenging look. Dmitry and Nadia stretched out their hands towards each other, but the spectre placed itself between them. Their faces looked more and more despairing, their forms grew more and more transparent, until they disappeared in a cloudy mist. She started forward and awoke. The room was dark and sultry. Raising herself in her bed, she tried to unravel the mysterious impressions of her dream. Her brow was damp, and she felt a sickly longing for fresh air; so, getting out of bed, and throwing a light shawl over her shoulders, she approached the window. The night was dark, the wind stirred and moved the rustling leaves. Suddenly her breath stopped; the whole horizon was bathed in a reddish light.

The barn is on fire, and they did not wake me, she thought. Hastily thrusting her feet into her slippers, she hurried out into the corridor. All the bedrooms were empty.

"Dmitry! Volodia!" she exclaimed several times, with increasing vehemence. No answer. She went twice to Nadia's door, calling her name loudly. All remained silent.

"My goodness! where are they? Where are my maids? Maria! Duniasha!"

The whole house was empty and silent. A nameless dread overcame the old lady; she did not understand that they had all gone to the fire, leaving her alone, without a word of warning. Indignation and anger filled her heart. She returned to her room, and began hurriedly to dress. The awful glare of the fire spread farther and farther on the dark night sky, and she thought that the whole village must also be ablaze. But suddenly she saw something much more horrible. Two or three figures were creeping stealthily into the courtyard; a confused noise of voices reached her ear. One of these figures was holding a lighted candle in his hand, which lit up his red shirt. It was a tall, broad-shouldered man.

And now something flashed out of the door of the store-house, a large stone building, quite near to the manor-house. At the same moment a flame burst out of the garret window, running quickly along the wooden beams of the lathed roof.

Anna Grigorievna groaned aloud: this was too much for her to bear.

"O Lord, help us!" she sighed; "they will burn down the whole manor-house!"

She felt unable to battle with her thoughts; a surge of blood rushed to her head, taking away her breath. But she struggled against her excitement, and her old composure returned. She felt obliged to do something, and not to submit blindly to fate. The whole corridor was steeped in darkness. She succeeded, however, in reaching the staircase; and now called her maid in a half-whisper, in order not to wake the sleeping inhabitants of the house. No one answering, she began to walk downstairs, but the strain on her nerves had been too great. Either her head grew giddy, or her feet did not find the steps in the darkness, for she slipped down, and struck her head against the banister. Then she fainted away.

## CHAPTER XXI.

ON the dike Dmitry overtook Christopher Karlovitch. The German was in a heat of indignation.

"Diese verfluchten Kerle!" he said, in his native tongue, adding some Russian words of a somewhat dubious nature. "Your brother has gone before with the fire-engines, for here I think the danger is past. Fifteen ricks were saved, after all. We put all the sheaves together, but I fear this pouring rain will spoil them."

The rain was, indeed, mercilessly lashing their faces; but neither Dmitry nor Nadia minded it: they hurried silently on. The lathed roof of the storehouse was still safe, but the trusses and beams were smouldering under the gushing torrents of rain; as for the other buildings, nothing was to be feared, all the roofs being of iron.

"Mitia!" cried Volodia's excited voice in the darkness, "come quickly along; mamma has met with an accident."

Dmitry and Nadia hurried into the house. Anna

Grigorievna had already been placed upon her bed. Old Aniussa was standing near her, sobbing loudly. She was still unconscious, her half-open eyes were lifeless, and her pale face was blood-stained. Dmitry felt her pulse.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, "she is alive. But she must be bled. Has any one sent for the doctor?"

Volodia shook his head.

"But how did it happen?" asked Dmitry, looking round.

In the doorway appeared the frightened faces of two maids.

"Batushka," said Aniussa, drying her tears, "scold me, as well as these two here," and she pointed to Maria and Duniasha: "they left our barine alone, and went down to the fire. I was sitting in the hall, fancying they were with her; and then, God forgive me, I fell asleep, and awoke suddenly on hearing a heavy fall on the stairs. I started up, taking hold of the candlestick, and saw our poor barine lying lifeless at the foot of the staircase, all covered with blood. I shrieked, and crossed myself, but what could I do alone? Then, most fortunately, Vladimir Alexandrovitch rushed into the house, to inquire whether she had been frightened or not, and we carried her upstairs, and placed her on this bed."

During this narrative they had washed her wounds, and put a cold bandage on her forehead; but she remained unconscious.

"There is some sal ammoniac here," said Nadia; "let us try if it might not do her good."

The phial was soon discovered, and did its duty. Life was restored to her benumbed body, her lips moved, and she raised her head almost imperceptibly. Joy lit up all faces.

"So it was no fit, after all," whispered Dmitry gladly; "I trust it will pass without inflammation."

They spent the night by her bed, following all her movements with the greatest attention. She was perfectly roused, but her weakness was so great that she was hardly able to move her lips, and her broken words were almost unintelligible. They had forgotten all about the fire, but the rain did its work, and towards morning even the sparks were extinguished.

"The shock on the brain must have been very great," said the doctor, when he came, towards nine o'clock in the morning. This time it was not the celebrated Dr. Findeisen. "Nothing can be said as yet."

He wrote a receipt, and promised to return in the evening.

Half an hour later, the troïka of the ispravnik dashed up to the entrance. Having heard all the details of the night's occurrences from the doctor, whom he had met on the way, he expressed his sympathy in the choicest words; yet a ring of distrust was audible through his flowery speeches, as if

he thought fit to suspect those who had suffered from the fire.

"A sad business," he said, caressing his moustache, which movement left some large black spots on the snowy cleanness of his gloves. "It is the first time that I have been obliged to appear in Biälastolby on an official mission."

"There is not the slightest doubt that the fire was laid on purpose," said Dmitry.

Amfili Nikandrovitch assumed an air of dignity.

"Nothing will be neglected on my side," he said; "and if the examination be entrusted to me——" He laughed biliously. "Well, let us see what those gentlemen of the justice court will do. We prepare the work for them, and if they——"

He always felt furious when he thought of the decrease of power which the police had suffered of late, and watched with joy the mistakes committed by those who were nothing but intruders in his eyes.

He ordered the gendarme to be sent for, and went himself into the office.

"What's this?" he cried, on seeing the flushed face of the gendarme; "you seem to have been taking too much wine."

"No, indeed, your nobility, I did not; it is nothing."

But the guardian of public order did not speak the exact truth. The evening before he had been

to Akime's tavern, and had feasted there, after which he had gone to sleep most soundly in a hayloft.

"Well," said Amfili Nikandrovitch, perceiving that the events of the night were only known to him by hearsay, "I hope this won't occur again, or I should be obliged to discharge you immediately."

And having provided him with fresh instructions, he sent him off to the trial, and set out himself for Tshornaïa Khutora. This time the volost elder was at home, and was not a little frightened on seeing the lord of the district.

"How stupid of you to have gone into town when I came to this damned volost!" he cried, as the elder approached the tarantass. "Ah! and your clerk, who was perfectly drunk when most wanted. What does this mean?"

The elder turned his cap uneasily in his hands, gazing at the ispravnik with the dull expression of a man who dreads having his beard pulled; but Nikandrovitch very seldom had recourse to such violent measures. He threw back the leathern cover, and leaning on the volost's shoulder, stepped out of the tarantass.

"Where is the peasant from Khavalinsky who lived here under the name of Efime Petroff?" he said, going into the office, and giving a mysterious expression to his face.

"The machinist, I suppose?" asked the other hesitatingly.

"Do you know who this machinist is?—as great a culprit as ever existed, a traitor to the Emperor, a villain!"

The elder gazed at him with a perplexed air.

"He lived here certainly, but he was an orderly man."

"Well, go and fetch him," said the ispravnik.

But what was his distress on hearing that Efime had disappeared in the night, without leaving any trace behind him. Quite forgetting that he might have arrested the culprit himself the day before, if he had gone on direct to Tshornaïa Khutora, he ordered the innocent soldier in whose house Efime had lived to be arrested. Handbills were put up everywhere, in order to identify the culprit. Nothing remained to be done now by Amfili Nikandrovitch but to occupy himself with the inquiry about the fire. He ordered the elder to carry this news at once to Biälastolby; but this time he did not boast of his superiority over the justices of peace. When he reached Biälastolby himself, the inquiry had already been going on for some time.

Generally speaking, Konevetzky thought it perfectly superfluous to do his work quickly, but with people whom he knew he made an exception. On receiving Dmitry's bill of indictment, he had resolved upon going immediately to Biälastolby. An attempt at murder was interesting enough to make him deviate from his usual slow way of business.

Since we saw Konevetzky, a great change had taken place within him. He had not dropped his thick and drowsy way of speaking, nor given up his elegant fineries, though steppe life had somewhat impressed him with its laziness, but his whole bearing had taken a stronger tinge of dignity and importance. He did not doubt for a moment that Dmitry felt very grateful for the zeal he had shown, and was therefore very much struck with the indifference with which he mentioned the whole affair of Gondsevsky; looking upon it as an old, long-forgotten story, as clear, moreover, as daylight. But this was not the opinion of Konevetzky, who had early imbibed that spirit of contradiction which prompts people never to look for truth where it is pointed out to them. In spite of his real wish to serve the Koretzkys, he began with expressing all sorts of doubts.

"Why suspect Gondsevsky? What does his returning in the evening with a gun prove? Why do you fancy the ball found in the copse was the same that was fired at you?"

Dmitry had great difficulty in hiding his impatience. These stupid objections excited him the more because the crime of Gondsevsky had dwindled into insignificance compared with the dangerous illness of his beloved mother, and because he felt that Konevetzky, though he had been called in by him, counted upon his gratitude.

"I must ask you to direct your whole attention to the doings of yesterday evening," he said, in an icy tone; "I consider them much more important than the slight danger which threatened me. Besides, it will be hard work to discover the guilty man."

These words made an unfavourable impression on the youthful magistrate.

"It may be hard work," he said, straightening himself, "but if the trial be led in a firm and resolute way——"

He did not conclude, but called his clerk to take down Dmitry's deposition. This being done and duly signed, he assured Dmitry, with a self-satisfied smile, that the culprit would be in prison before night, and went down to the village to examine the peasants. But as they were all at their work it was a long time before they came. It seemed perfectly incomprehensible to Konevetzky how they could leave him, the magistrate, waiting for them in the empty farmhouse, where he had taken up his residence.

In the meantime the starost and the manor labourers were examined.

"Do you suspect any one?" he regularly asked, with a look which wanted to pierce through their breast.

But this look did not frighten the peasants. They said that it was an easy thing for the Almighty to set a house on fire, and pretended never to have

heard the name of Flegont. The starost, however, after scratching his neck and straightening his back, said, somewhat diffidently, and looking out of the window,—

"No one else did this but Flegont."

"And who is this?" asked the magistrate; "you know that you are obliged to answer me as before God, and that every lie is severely punished by law."

He did not seem to know that threats were the best means of preventing the truth from being spoken.

"He is the worst fellow in the whole village, this Flegont Parfemoff," answered the starost.

"What proofs have you for your supposition?" continued Konevetzky, with a great deal of solemnity.

The peasants were now thronging into the room, all bowing, first to the image in the corner, then to the representive of the law.

"Not all at once," cried the clerk; "stay out of doors, and I'll call you in one by one."

But Konevetzky felt so abashed at the sight of this crowd that he did not know what to do. He got up, lighted a cigarette, and took hold of the bill of indictment.

"Call Flegont Parfemoff," he said, in a trembling voice to a tithe-man with a medal on his breast.

"He is here on the staircase, your nobility," answered the man, in a high-pitched voice.

The peasants looked at each other. Flegont appeared immediately, with his red shirt, his self-confident air, and placing himself before the magistrate, gazed straight into his eyes. This made him feel still more confused, and he entirely forgot to clear the room of the spectators.

"Are you not going to send these away?" asked the clerk. "How will you question them all at once?"

At this moment the ispravnik appeared.

"Please, may I assist at the sitting?" he asked, with studied submission.

"With the greatest pleasure," answered Konevetzky shyly.

"You have got on very quickly, I see," said Amfili Nikandrovitch, lighting a cigarette; "are you going to question all these people at the same time?"

"Oh, no; please, go away!"

"You hear what the magistrate says," repeated the ispravnik, in a higher and more commanding tone.

The peasants left, and the interrogation of Flegont began. He denied having anything whatever to do with the business, and it was impossible to get anything else out of him. Konevetzky did not know how to deal with such an impudent character, and began to whistle to himself.

"Can you write?" he asked at last. "Then please to sign your deposition."

Slowly taking the offered pen between his fingers, Flegont signed his name, and then left the room, continually shaking his curls.

Konevetzky wiped his damp brow.

"Who is to be called now?" asked the clerk.

"I don't know, indeed."

"Isaï Terentieff is the next on the list."

"Then let it be Isaï Terentieff."

And the same questions were put, in the same order:—"What's your name?" "What's your age?" "Of the orthodox religion?" And the same answers were all given. All had seen the conflagration; none knew the cause of it.

This lasted for three whole hours. Konevetzky, perfectly wearied out, did not cease to wipe his moist brow. The same words, continually repeated, buzzing in his ears, had lost all sense to him. The ispravnik was sitting on the bench, looking on with a mocking smile, from time to time getting up to examine the written depositions. At last the cup was entirely drained—the last witness had left the room.

"You can't believe what dreary work this is," exclaimed Konevetzky, as if wishing to rouse the other's pity, "to fight with them for hours together, without ever receiving a single rational answer!"

He got up and began collecting his papers. The clerk came to his help.

"Do you really want them to present you the truth

on their open palms ?" asked the ispravnik, laughing. "Have you done?" he added, on seeing the other put his papers in the portfolio.

"Of course I am going to order the cessation of the pursuit."

"Without having found out the culprit? And yet you have seen him face to face."

"Whom do you mean?—face to face?"

"Flegont, of course. You have his deposition, have you not?"

"Yes, but there are no proofs at all."

"How little you know the peasants! If you had simply arrested Flegont, how they would have talked! Now they are afraid of him, of course. He was the first to give the alarm, was he not?"

"What does this prove?" asked Konevetzky, handing the portfolio to his clerk and wrapping himself in all the superior coldness of his official dignity. "You want me to arrest a man on account of one deposition against him. People may have acted thus in former days——"

"Now, come along," said the ispravnik impatiently. "We can't sit the whole day in this suffocating room."

They returned together to the house, exchanging their views about the new and old institutions. The clerk, following with the portfolio under his arm, gazed with a curious, investigating look at the hens scratching the dunghill for some oat grains.

On perceiving the ispravnik, the gendarme hurried towards him with a beaming face.

"We've caught him, your nobility," he exclaimed, placing two fingers on the border of his cap.

"Who has been caught?"

"Who but the chief commander himself."

"Impossible! Neradovitch! Where did you take him?"

"At the post-house. We recognised him from the description."

"Where is he now?"

"In the stable. Oh, he is safe there!"

Amfili Nikandrovitch returned to the office, feeling in high spirits. Here he examined all the portraits of Neradovitch, which he had himself handed over to the policemen. Konevetzky followed, rejoicing to see at last one of those enigmatical beings of whom he had heard so much.

Five minutes later Vokhin appeared, dragging after him a feeble old man, dressed in a few rags, kept together with wooden buttons. His tottering feet hardly carried him, and his hands were tied together.

"What! Neradovitch!" cried the ispravnik, in speechless wonder, comparing the image in his hand with the harmless face of the old man. Konevetzky burst out into a loud laugh.

"Are you Neradovitch?" he asked of the prisoner.

"Eh?" said the old man, applying his palm to his right ear. "I am the former schoolmaster of this

village. I was discharged by Dmitry Alexandrovitch because somebody had told wicked things about me to him."

"We'll see that!" exclaimed the ispravnik, striking the table with his hand. "None of you will acknowledge he is the master, of course?"

He knew perfectly well that, though it is a dangerous thing to shake the authority of the police, yet here a gross mistake had been made. Taking up his cap, he returned to the house, ordering the others to wait for him. There was not the slightest trace of self-satisfaction in his face as he re-appeared in the drawing-room. He asked Dmitry to accompany him to the office to ascertain the identity of one of the prisoners.

"What!" cried Dmitry, laughing, "my poor old Sikofantoff! Have you been arrested for a political crime? Oh, let him go wherever he likes, please."

And Dmitry told the story of the old man's discharge. In spite of his present pre-occupation, he could not forbear laughing at this gross mistake. Amfili Nikandrovitch was foaming, especially as Konevetzky did not spare him, making all sorts of jokes at the police's humiliation.

"I can't set him free without an order from the authorities, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," he said; "but depend upon it they knew what they were doing. Why did you arrest him?" he added, addressing the gendarme.

"I saw a man standing at the post-house, your nobility," he answered, somewhat abashed. "He did not look like a peasant, so I asked him for his passport. He had none, and then I arrested him. He is a great villain, I know."

The ispravnik, having ordered Vokhim to have the old man put into the town prison, left Biälastolby himself. He felt very much depressed; all sorts of suspicions rose in his mind, and he gave himself up to them with a strange delight. He considered all that he had heard and seen at Biälastolby, and several things struck him as very odd. Who would have expected such things to occur in the house of a respectable lady like Anna Grigorievna! He attributed his failure with Neradovitch only to Dmitry, and was ready to seek for some villainy in the way in which he had interceded for Sikofantoff.

On that very evening in the club, while talking over the latest events with one of his friends, he expressed loudly his suspicions of the Koretzky family.

In the meantime, the young scholar of jurisprudence having restored his strength with an excellent dinner, was hurrying over to Tshornaïa Khutora, to set about the trial of Gondsevsky. The failure at Bialästolby had added fuel to his zeal. He no longer doubted the validity of the convincing proofs; they were, indeed, of a serious nature. The ball found in the copse was exactly like the one in Gondsevky's room, and both answered to the calibre of

his gun. The witnesses deposed that the Pole had threatened more than once to kill Dmitry, and had, moreover, not been at home when the shot was fired. In a word, Konevetzky was fully convinced of the prisoner's guilt; and as he wanted, above all, to get home as quickly as possible, he ordered Gondsevsky to be put into the town prison.

## CHAPTER XXII.

ON the following day, Elena drove over to Biälastolby to inquire about Anna's health. Volodia, on seeing her carriage from his bedroom, hurried downstairs, hoping to see Jenny, but Elena was alone, and bitter disappointment was visible on his face when the elegant four-in-hand dashed up to the door. Elena held out her hand to him with that friendly ease with which she had treated him from the first day of their acquaintance. The most sincere sympathy resounded in her voice and beamed in her beautiful eyes. She had entirely forgotten the last quarrel which had taken place between them, and showed herself as a perfect woman of the world.

"No, Vladimir Alexandrovitch," she said, "I won't alight, as I can't see your mother. Strangers are but a nuisance when people are ill. But you will let me know as soon as there is a change for the better, won't you? And then I'll come again."

Volodia thanked her most heartily. All his resentment against her had vanished, and he could not fancy that this sweet, enchanting woman wanted to close the road to happiness upon him.

"I hope she will be better before I leave. You know that we are going abroad in a fortnight, I suppose?" she added lightly, as if mentioning an old, long-known fact. But her words stabbed Volodia to the heart.

"You are going away?" he almost shouted, without even trying to hide his despair.

"Did I really never mention this to you? Yes, we are going to some sea-bath; I don't know which, perhaps Trouville or Biarritz."

It suddenly struck Volodia that it would be necessary to feign in Elena's presence, and hide all the heartache which he felt; but he was unable to find a suitable theme, and took up the first thing which occurred to him, though it was equally uninteresting to them both.

"I have still some books which belong to you," he said; "I'll run upstairs to fetch them, if you like."

"Just as you please. But, really, I am in no hurry to get them," she said, smiling, for she saw plainly that these books were only the pretext to hide the deep impression which the news of her proposed journey had made on him. But Volodia was wilful, and hurried off with unwonted zeal to look for the books. These were two volumes of Alfred de Musset. At first he could not find them. His head felt giddy with the thought that Jenny was going away in a fortnight; and he did not know when they would meet again. Ten times, at least, he

passed before the place in the dining-room where one of the volumes was lying unread, only pondering on the question, what would happen now, and whether his future was ruined for ever? He would certainly not give up his happiness without a struggle, for it often happened that the most entangled circumstances suddenly came to a happy end. And the whole time the book was lying on the table, and his blinded eyes did not see it. At last he espied it; and then, remembering that the second volume was in Nadia's room, he rushed after it. The room was empty, but the book was on a mahogany chest of drawers. He seized it, and hurried back with it to Elena, without observing an envelope, which was stuck between the pages. The maid had found a paper on the floor, and put it as a marker into the book. Volodia was going to excuse himself for having tarried so long, but seeing Elena deep in conversation with his brother, he refrained from saying anything.

Dmitry was astonished to see her carriage at the door on his return from the fields. The kind and easy way in which she addressed him would have struck him still more if he had not known the wonderful power she exercised over her feelings. He thanked her in his heart for thus wiping away the remembrance of their last quarrel; it had left a sad impression on his mind, and he fancied he would always feel something like shame, even hostility, whenever he met her again. And now she treated

him in such a frank and tender way! "Men could not behave thus!" he ejaculated mentally. Social formalities have certainly one good result; they bring people easily through the most embarrassing positions, and wipe off the roughness of the past, if not in reality, certainly in their outward relations to each other.

Elena thanked Volodia very graciously, and put the books into the carriage with an air of great indifference.

"We'll meet before I leave? Yes, of course, several times yet," she said, smiling, as she took leave of Dmitry.

Anna Grigorievna, in the meantime, had not recovered. She was lying in a state of half-conciousness, as if mind and will were benumbed, and life with her only smouldering, like a wick without oil. Two whole days passed in this way, and the doctor shook his head more and more uneasily. A feeling of increasing danger pervaded the whole household. On the third day she grew rapidly worse, being unable to take any nourishment; her mind even began to wander. The doctor did not pronounce the fatal word, but every one felt that it was paralysis of the brain. Her life was ebbing fast away, and they forgot the surrounding world in their care of her. Yet life did not stand still, and each new day brought its share of toil and care. Dmitry could not forgive himself for being still taken up with those petty duties

which make up the sum of life; but the field labours were too important to be neglected, and every passing hour required his attention. Fortunately, all went smoothly for him; his resolute behaviour at the fire had greatly impressed the labourers, and they had gone quietly to the wheat harvest on the following day. Trofime had told him, in the name of the whole mir,[1] that they wished very much to conclude the proposed arrangement, which had only been baffled by the manœuvres of some villains, and to live with him in peace and concord afterwards. Dmitry promised to forget the past; and this whole affair, which had cost so much pain and suffering, was definitely settled in a few minutes.

Ten days passed in this way, and the expectation of the final catastrophe weighed heavily on the Koretzky family. The departure of Nadia was, of course, put off; she would not leave her aunt as long as her life was in danger. But neither she nor Dmitry seemed to remember their betrothal now; they would have deemed it dishonourable to utter words of love and tenderness when seeing the helplessness of her who had opposed their union so strongly.

In the meantime Amfili Nikandrovitch had lost no time: he had described Dmitry's behaviour in the darkest colours; and these rumours soon reached the ears of the highest authorities. He even asked for a conference with Boroffsky on this subject. But

[1] Assembly of the village.

Nicholas Ossipovitch only listened to him with his mocking smile, and dismissed him with a few jesting remarks. From him he immediately hurried to the governor; but here he did not fare much better. His Excellency was, by nature, inclined to leniency, as most people are who live much in ladies' society; he belonged, moreover, to those administrators who are deeply convinced of their own helplessness, and expect the smallest possible success of any governmental measure. The colonel's suggestions were only met by a dubious shake of the head. He knew Anna Grigorievna most intimately, and deemed it perfectly ridiculous to suspect her of any connivance with revolutionaries, because she had adopted a poor relation whose past was of a rather mysterious nature.

"Enough of this!" he exclaimed good-naturedly. "We shall only make ourselves ridiculous if we tremble before a young girl of eighteen! And such a lovely one, moreover," he added, remembering the impression which Nadia had made upon him.

However, three days later, when Dmitry called upon him on some business matter, he thought fit to put some question to him about his beautiful cousin, Nadeshda Sergeïevna. He made use of his most exquisite eloquence to hint at the young girl having been thrown so early on the world, that she had not always known how to avoid the acquaintance of dubious people.

Dmitry returned in a very grave mood after this

conversation. As soon as he got home, he went in search of Nadia, whom he found in the arbour facing the hollow. He repeated the words of the governor to her. Nadia gave him a wondering look.

"Do you really fancy I am corresponding with those people?" she said. "After all that has happened, you ought not to think so."

"You don't understand me, Nadia; I only fear you might still have some stray paper—a book, a letter; I don't know—— For all this ought to be destroyed. It was not without reason that the governor spoke in this way. Who knows what they have been telling about you?"

Nadia shook her head.

"All that I had was burnt in Moscow, long ago. It is true, I got two letters here from Neradovitch. One through Vassili; this I burned. The other through Volodia; this I confess to have kept, because it was the cause of our meeting in the forest."

She turned her large, truthful eyes upon him, but Dmitry frowned on hearing this.

"Nadia," he said, "will you give me this letter?"

He wanted to tear asunder the last link between her and her past, but Nadia did not guess his thoughts.

"I would do so with the greatest pleasure if the letter had not been mislaid; it was on the chest of drawers in my bedroom, and Mavra must have thrown it away when cleaning the room."

"How imprudent of you! You ought to have been more careful!"

She gave him a startled look; it seemed so strange to her to hear reproving words from his lips.

"It is not of the slightest importance, dearest; the letter was not signed."

They were both silent for some moments.

"Dmitry," she whispered almost below her breath, "do you really fancy I care for my past? I think of it with loathing. I can't forgive myself that you granted this delay to Neradovitch on my account. I am the cause of the fire, as well as of aunt's illness."

She bent her head; hot tears were welling up into her eyes.

"Nadia, why reproach yourself?" he said tenderly, placing himself on the bench near her. "I am only anxious about you. I will save you. There must be no thorns in your path."

And for the first time after their explanation in the garden he folded her trembling form in his embrace.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE long-expected change in the state of Anna Grigorievna at last took place. One day the doctor declared that her pulse was good, that the fever had subsided, and the swelling of the brain diminished. This happened exactly a fortnight after the fire. It was a great relief to all the inhabitants of the house, for they all felt guilty of her illness. The recovery, however, made slow progress, and she was still an invalid when the month of August made its appearance, bringing an eternally blue sky, the monotony of which was hardly ever broken by a pale cloud floating on its surface, as smooth and broad as the steppe itself. The abundant harvest had been all gathered in and heaped up in the barns; the voice of the thrashing machine was buzzing unceasingly. But the mistress of Biälastolby, to whom this time of the year used to be a real holiday of unwearied, lively activity, remained perfectly indifferent to what was going on on her estate. She never inquired about anything, and whenever her sons put a question to her, she only answered with a

shake of her head, as if all this had no importance in her eyes. Day after day she sat in the great leather armchair near the window of her bedroom, now taking up her knitting, now asking to be read to ; but the knitting soon dropped from her hands, and the expression of her face showed that she did not listen to the words of the book. Another week passed before she asked to be taken out of doors into the fresh air ; but the air did her no good, and she seemed only to think of avoiding the sight of the trees and fields. She treated her surroundings with a sort of grateful tenderness, but in this there was something of the helpless submission of a sick child. It was strange and sad, at the same time, to witness this entire renunciation of life. Elena Michaïlovna called twice, but she steadfastly refused to see her. Tomiline was the only person she liked to see, and once she kept him for a whole hour in her room. His conversation soothed and revived her at the same time, for he had been able to solve a question which had been troubling her a long time. As soon as he left her, she called Dmitry to her, and told him that she was going to surrender the whole management of the estate to him.

"You understand this much better than I do, Mitia," she said ; "times are altered now, new people are wanted. To bring back old times is not in my power, to bend to the new ones is impossible to me."

She said this without any bitterness, though she knew very well that this complete change in all her habits and traditions would weigh heavily on her: she felt like an experienced general who has sustained a sudden defeat in his old age. Having thus confessed her helplessness, she felt much better. Dmitry did not oppose her, for he knew that she had taken this resolution after a great struggle and in a self-sacrificing spirit. From this time she discussed business freely with her son, and gave him many bits of good advice, though it was done with that want of interest which official people display when talking of politics after they have retired into private life. Anna Grigorievna, however, had not been quite open-hearted with her surroundings. Another secret care weighed on her mind. She never mentioned Nadia's departure, though the time fixed for it was passed long ago. She treated the young girl with tenderness, often thanking her for her sweet and loving care during the long days of her illness, but avoiding strenuously all mention of what had passed between them on the unhappy day of the fire. Only, whenever the young girl had her back turned upon her, she fixed her eyes on her, and then her looks expressed a deep distrust and sad reproaches. Yet she could not come to the resolution of sending her away; her own long illness and Nadia's tender care of her had woven new bonds of love between them, and she felt how impossible it would be to thrust her out of her home.

Nadia on her side had freely forgiven her aunt her offensive words; sure of her own innocence, she found it easy to forgive. The idea of some intrigue on Nadia's part never came into Anna Grigorievna's head; she knew her proud and truthful nature too well for that. And now, if she parted from her, would not all her old comrades crowd round her again and push her onward on the old, too well-known path? And if she escaped this danger, would not another, a greater one, weigh on her, that of official distrust? Whatever she did, she could never escape the ties of her past, and would be obliged to remain upon a road on which young and passionate people easily come to grief. And all this because her aunt's self-love quailed before the idea of a marriage with her son. Yes, it was nothing but self-love; all the arguments which had seemed so victorious a short time ago now dwindled into nothing when closely examined into. Yet she did not give way at once. Before coming to a final resolution, she sent for Tomiline, hoping he would strengthen her in her doubts.

"Formerly I never asked for any one's advice," she thought, with a sad smile, as she sealed her note to Tomiline. But his visit had not the expected result. He pleaded passionately for Nadia, assuring her that she would never find another such treasure for her beloved son.

"I should never have dared to talk of Nadeshda Sergeievna to you," he said, "but it has weighed on

my mind a long time. How many weary months has she gone on suffering, while she might have been so happy!"

He would not even admit her past to be an impediment.

"Believe me," he continued, "whoever has once turned away from a gulf of misery does not return to it willingly, unless driven to it. I do not indulge in the same day-dreams as the present generation, but I declare to you that I never yet saw a girl like Nadeshda Sergeievna; I am ready to throw myself into the fire for her, I tell you."

"Yes, I see; she has succeeded in turning all your heads," she said, laughing, though she did not feel gay; for now that she stood before a final resolution, she felt the whole weight of her responsibility. But her illness had taught her patience and broken her pride. She listened to Tomiline in silence, but in her own heart she was already half won over.

On the evening of that same day, Nadia entered the morning room, where Anna Grigorievna now spent almost all her afternoons in a pensive listlessness; to-day she had even asked to be left alone.

"What do you want?" she asked, with a start, as Nadia entered.

"Forgive me, my dear aunt," she answered; "I know you wanted to be left alone; still I must tell you." Here her voice shook. "Now you are better, and do not want me any longer——"

"What do you mean?" asked her aunt, in a vexed tone.

"It is time for me to go, auntie. You remember you told me to remain here for another week; since then a month has passed."

"And if I do not intend to let you go at all?"

Anna Grigorievna raised herself in her armchair; though her voice sounded imperious, her eyes beamed with tenderness, and her arms were stretched out towards the young girl.

"'Not intend,' darling aunt?" exclaimed Nadia wonderingly, and in a moment she was kneeling before her aunt, who bent tenderly down over her, kissing her forehead.

"You will remain here, Nadia," she said, through her tears, "remain here for ever—as my daughter; do you understand?"

Nadia did not believe her ears. Was such a bliss indeed to be hers? To Anna Grigorievna she must have seemed very cold at this moment. Joy does not easily take root in a heart to whom life has not taught happiness.

"And now go and call Dmitry," said Anna Grigorievna hurriedly, as if wanting to shut the door upon her new resolution. She wished to witness the joy of her son, and thus quench the last spark of her refractory and long-cherished pride.

## CHAPTER XXIV

VOLODIA looked out vainly for some happy chance to procure an interview with Jenny. Luck had favoured him in such an extraordinary way during his whole courtship, that he imagined it would remain true to him till the very last. But a whole month had elapsed since he had seen Jenny; she had not visited once at Biälastolby, and he had not had the courage to go to Nikolsky again. He began to devise the most impossible plans, and his excited imagination even dwelt on the possibility of carrying her off to the farthest end of the world. But it is one thing to devise such a plan, another to carry it out. In his rare moments of perfect sincerity with himself he was obliged to confess that he was not quite sure of Jenny's consenting to it, and whenever this thought occurred to him, he was ready to vent all his wrath on the little fairy, accusing her of having quite forgotten him. But Jenny was far from this: the truth was, that she had not yet succeeded in throwing off the yoke of her step-mother. Elena had taken all the necessary steps

to prevent the young people from meeting, without giving Jenny the slightest pretext for an open revolt. The servants had received the strictest orders never to admit Volodia, if he should present himself. She had expressed her dissatisfaction with Miss Finch in a rather sharp tone, telling her that the frequent meetings of the two young people were highly shocking, and ought never to take place again. The good-natured governess answered that she did not see anything shocking in this, the less so as it was admitted in all the aristocratic families in which she had lived in England. But Elena answered that Russia was not England, and that in Miss Finch's country parents might happen not to protest against heiresses falling in love with younger sons without any position in the world, as they did in her own country. To Jenny she never mentioned Volodia's name, rightly judging that, with her step-daughter's character, it would only urge her on to disobedience; and as she knew herself that her power over her was not very great, she preferred inventing all sorts of excuses for not allowing her to return to Biälastolby. The illness of Anna Grigorievna served as a most welcome pretext. Jenny understood all this very well, but she preferred to seem unconscious of Elena's manœuvres; a sharp defence would have urged her on to rebellion, but Elena's soft and tender voice disarmed her entirely. And why should she be impatient? At sixteen years of age life seems long,

and Jenny did not believe that anything could darken the sun-flooded path which stretched out before her.

Volodia's patience, however, had reached its end. After many doubts, he resolved upon the simplest way of solving the difficulty—he ordered his horse to be saddled, and rode over to Nikolsky. During his ride, his thoughts dwelt on the happy hour when he had seen Jenny for the first time. He again saw her flexible, elegant figure, the plain black dress in which she had presented herself while he stood irresolutely before the silent, inhospitable mansion. He remembered how the first look which he had thrown on her childish face had evoked within him feelings such as he had never known for any other being on earth. How warm and tender was the flash of her deep-set eyes! how light and graceful the bend of her shoulders! how thick the masses of hair that clustered behind her small, quick ear! And the stupid prejudices of a hard-hearted step-mother were to rob him of all these treasures of beauty, were to disturb the brightest hope he had on earth!

This time his apprehensions were realized. The livery servant told him, with an impudent smile, that the ladies were not at home, though the sound of Elena's piano floated out of the open window. She played in a hard, dry way, so utterly different from Jenny's soft, caressing touch; and to-day the passionate strains of Mendelssohn's "Fantasia" sounded strangely excited. She had been told that very day

of Dmitry's betrothal to Nadia; and though it did not take her by surprise,—she had been expecting it long,—her heart sank within her, and a feeling of revengeful hatred took possession of her whole soul as she thought that another woman was going to enjoy the happiness coveted by her, and that nothing on earth could prevent it. Nothing? It suddenly struck her that there was a man whose wounded self-love would make him suffer just as much as she did. And this man—how well she knew him!—never forgave an offence. In his hands a power was to be found which could not only prevent this marriage, but even blot out Nadia from among the living. She knew something of the young girl's past; personal impressions completed the few indications she had got from the ispravnik; her womanly sagacity suggested the rest. And she told herself that if Nadia was going to pay now for her youthful errors, it would be nothing but a just retaliation. The Koretzky family ought to be grateful to her if she succeeded in unmasking this impostor, and removing her from their intimate circle. One step further, and she imputed to the purest motives of disinterestedness her wish of crushing her enemy. Yet conscience is not easily deceived: it soon spoke loudly, and tore asunder the transparent veil with which she wanted to cover her true feelings. Her whole desolate life, now ruined for ever through this event, gave her the right to hate these people, and to avenge herself upon them as

soon as the opportunity presented itself. She wrote a few words to Boroffsky, asking him to come and see her before he left the neighbourhood.

She had spent the whole day in preparing her plan, and revelled in the triumphant feeling she would experience when Dmitry saw the happiness of his life dissolve between his hands. She sat down to the piano and tried to express the indignation which raged within her through the voice of her music; but this most delicate of arts seldom lends its voice to wicked passions, and she felt unable to go on with it. She got up, and began looking for a book which might divert her thoughts. Her eyes fell on a volume lying on the drawing-room table; it was the same which Volodia had returned to her. The passionate poetry of Musset would suit her better than the music of Mendelssohn, she thought. But she had hardly taken it into her hand before an envelope, bearing Nadia's address, caught her eye. The handwriting was angular and sharp, as if it belonged to a man of a particular, restless, and strong character. What if this had been written by one of Nadia's former friends?—if she was now holding the key to her mysterious past in her hands? She wanted to peruse it very much, but she had been taught to consider this a shameful proceeding. Yet it could not be a very important letter which was lying carelessly among the leaves of a book. Conscience, however, did not answer that it was less wrong to read

an unimportant letter. She drew it quickly out of the envelope, and perused the note in which Neradovitch asked Nadia to come and meet him in the forest. A wicked joy lit up Elena's face: she had the proof of the young girl's guilt in her hands. It is true, the letter was not signed, but its contents sufficed to ruin Nadia. She replaced it in the envelope and shut it carefully up in a drawer of her writing-table.

Volodia, in the meantime, was returning to Biälastolby at a furious pace, venting his indignation on poor Soliman. He met Nadia and Dmitry before the entrance of the manor-house, and springing from his horse, told them the total failure of his plan in an excited voice and with a despairing face; but he saw that his words did not make the slightest impression on them.

"And this must happen to me, while you are in the full enjoyment of your bliss! Yes, happy people are always egotistical," he said, forgetting how little he had minded other people's misfortunes as long as fortune smiled on him.

Dmitry and Nadia looked at each other.

"Well, even supposing your grief to be so very great, I don't think you need despair."

"What! not even if I lose Jenny for ever?" Volodia cried, forgetting that he had been just as unhappy four months ago, when he had been refused by Nadia.

"You need not be in such an awful hurry, my dear; you are twenty-two and she is sixteen years of age; it is rather early to think of marriage."

But Volodia would not listen to him.

"In a few days she will have left; and who knows whether we shall ever meet again, if no binding words are exchanged between us? They will win her over; she is but a child as yet."

This last argument was not quite devoid of good sense, and proved that Volodia had no great faith in his future wife's steadfastness. Nadia took his part, not deeming Jenny too young to marry, and wishing, moreover, to see every one happy.

"Well," said Dmitry, "I might try and ride over to Nikolsky myself to convince Elena Michaïlovna. For you know, I suppose, that no girl of sixteen years of age can marry without her guardian's consent? As for Jenny's consent, you have made sure of it, have you?"

Volodia assured him that all had been settled between Jenny and himself, though the final promise had not yet been exchanged.

"This, however, does not signify," he said, in the tone of a man not fully believing in his own words. "But you must promise me one other thing: I'll give you a letter for Jenny, and you'll deliver it to her yourself. Perhaps she may want to send me a few words. It is too sad not to see her, not to know anything about her."

On the following morning Dmitry rode over to Nikolsky, after having promised to deliver his brother's note to the little fairy unperceived. This whole romance seemed so innocent to Dmitry that he had consented without the slightest hesitation to take upon him the ungrateful task of a mediator.

The tall footman did not treat him as curtly as he had treated Volodia, but took him immediately upstairs. In the drawing-room he found Jenny, instead of Elena, who was finishing some important letters in her morning-room.

"At last!" cried Jenny, holding out her hand to him; "I thought you had quite forgotten us."

"But you seem equally to have forgotten the road to Biälastolby, Eugenia Alexandrovna; and yet you know that there is somebody there who is expecting you with a heavy heart."

She blushed, but did not answer. They were standing near the open folding-doors leading out on the terrace.

"My brother was here yesterday, but——"

"Yes, I know. I was so sorry; but it was not my fault."

"Do you remember our talking once about being allies?" asked Dmitry, smiling; "shall we keep up this alliance? Don't answer me in words; I read your answer in your eyes."

She turned her flushed face shyly towards Dmitry.

"Tell your brother," she said, with a visible effort,

but suddenly an expression of strong resoluteness stole over her face, "that I shall certainly see him before we leave; I promise it."

"I brought this for you," said Dmitry, drawing the small note out of his pocket; "it is rather a strange proceeding for a man of my age, I confess, but I hope you will forgive me."

Anything but anger beamed in Jenny's face as her trembling fingers closed upon the letter and hid it in her pocket.

"I have some very important business to transact with your step-mother, a most serious question to put to her; you guess the tenour of it, I suppose? therefore I should like to know your opinion first."

But the poor girl was spared the pain of answering, for Elena appeared at the open door. In every movement of her body, in the very folds of her tight dress, showing off her faultless figure, there was something severe and repulsive.

"Forgive me, I was only finishing a letter," she said, with a metallic ring in her voice, hardly touching Dmitry's outstretched hand with the tips of her fingers; "besides, I see that you were not dull," and she glanced uneasily at her daughter's flushed face. "Est-ce que vous lui faites aussi la cour?" she inquired, without even trying to conceal her mocking tone.

Jenny fled out on the terrace, and Dmitry followed Elena into her sitting-room. He had not entered

that room since his lips had been passionately pressed to hers. It seemed so very long ago; and now?

"For what am I indebted to the honour of your visit?" she said, sinking down in a low armchair. "I am almost obliged to put this question to you, as it is so very long since I saw you."

"Well, it is very important business which brings me here to-day."

She pointed to a chair near her.

"I am delighted, as it promises us a long conversation."

There was a ring of mockery audible through the sweetness of these words.

Dmitry explained at once his brother's request. Elena listened attentively, without allowing her face to betray any of her feelings.

"You have finished, have you? And you say all this in such a quiet business-like tone! You want me to consent to Jenny's marriage with your brother? Well, I'll be as open-hearted with you as you have been with me. At Jenny's age I think the choice of a governess would be more opportune than that of a husband; a clever man like you can't wonder at this decision."

The icy tone in which these words were pronounced made them sound still more sarcastic than they were. Dmitry, however, did not give up the question at once.

"I did not talk of their marriage," he said; "they

can wait two or three years yet. I only meant that Volodia had the right to insist upon seeing his bride before she leaves."

Elena stared at Dmitry, while a strange smile played round her lips.

"That is, in other words," she said, after a moment's silence, "you want to bind my step-daughter, though you know very well that she is not yet able to make her choice with full knowledge and judgment."

"There are circumstances which make an exception to general rules: country life draws people much more quickly together than anything else. Why keep them asunder on account of their youth? Remember how it was with us, Elena Michaïlovna; was our life not spoilt for years through the obstinacy of your parents?"

Those last imprudent words almost drove her mad.

"You compare me to Cleopatra Andreïevna!" she cried, furious; "thank you! Well, your life, for aught I know, was not spoilt. You travelled abroad, studied agronomy, which, if I am not grossly mistaken, is not the sign of a deep sorrow, and now it seems that you are basking in the full sunlight of happiness."

"We were not talking of me, Elena Michaïlovna."

"You are right," she answered, with a wicked smile; "it was of your brother, of course. Now, I think that if he has profited by the free intercourse of country life to turn the head of a girl of sixteen years of age,

who by the bye is a rich heiress, it does not tend to his honour. Please to tell him this. As for you, I wonder at the part you play in this affair, you who cannot plead the madness of an all-absorbing passion as an excuse."

Dmitry flushed scarlet. He started up; but she continued without minding him.

"You were just now assuring me that Jenny loved your brother. I don't know how you came by this knowledge, but I presume you profited by my absence to hold a secret conference with my daughter, who is nothing more than a child, and this in order to prove the disinterestedness of your brother's love."

Elena had said this without looking at Dmitry, and though her voice had remained even and quiet, the words sounded like the lashing of a horsewhip.

"You will never more have to complain of my coming to see you here," answered Dmitry drily.

"As you like," she said coldly, without moving, only slightly bending her head as he turned towards the door.

Dmitry found Jenny in the hall waiting for him.

"Bad news?" she asked, concluding from his excited face that they had come to no understanding.

"Your future may still become bright, Jenny dearest," he answered tenderly; "but I pity you deeply for being obliged to obey this woman."

"I! She may shut me up in my room, but break

my will, never! I'll prove this to you immediately, if you wish. She refused, did she? Well, tell your brother—no, I had better tell him myself."

"How good you are!" and he kissed her little hand. "Well, I'll tell you a secret, but only to you;" and he told her of his betrothal.

Jenny clapped her hands.

"How glad I am for you and for her! I like her so much; please tell her so."

Dmitry had hardly left her when Elena opened the door of the drawing-room; seeing Jenny in the hall, she cried sharply,—

"What are you doing here—again talking to Dmitry Alexandrovitch?"

She was so excited after her conversation with the young man that she was unable to hide her wrath before her step-daughter. But this young person was not disposed to yield.

"Yes, I did," she said, "and shall do so as often as I have the opportunity of seeing him. Since when am I not allowed to talk to my acquaintances?"

"Koretzky has ceased to be an acquaintance of ours; you will never more see him here."

"Then I'll go and see him in his own house."

The blazing eyes of the young girl were riveted on her step-mother's face with a threatening expression.

"Go and see him! why, Jenny, you forget yourself. I forbid you ever to leave the garden, or to walk out without Miss Finch."

Jenny burst out into a hearty laugh on hearing these words.

"Well, we shall see," she said; "but you forget that you are not my mother, and that I am the mistress of Nikolsky."

Having said this, she dashed downstairs, snatched up her garden-hat, and ran into the stable, where she found her little satellite, Vassia.

"Saddle my horse quickly!" she ordered.

"Who is to accompany you, miss?"

"No one; I'll ride out by myself."

"But her excellency has strictly forbidden this."

"You must obey me; I am mistress here, and no one else."

And having convinced herself that Vassia was indeed going to clean and saddle the horse, she hurried back to the house to dress herself.

## CHAPTER XXV.

DMITRY found his brother in a mysterious conversation with the coachman. As soon as he perceived him, Volodia, however, broke off his colloquy, looking somewhat confused.

"You are bringing bad news, I fear," he said. "I knew that nothing good would come out of a discourse with that horrid old thing. Never mind, we'll see what's to be done."

And with a stroke of his whip he cut off some blooming dahlias. It was easy to see that he was meditating something, he looked so self-possessed and mysterious; but he did not belong to those who are capable of keeping a secret to themselves, so Dmitry had no difficulty in learning what he was contriving.

"I'll elope with her," he said, "that's what I'll do. A troïka will await us on the highroad, and we shall be in time to catch the evening train. Elena Micharlovna won't know anything of it before it is too late."

"You wrote and proposed this mad plan to her?" cried Dmitry, hardly trusting his ears. "Well, I ought

to be very flattered to have been the bearer of such a message."

"No, I did not propose it in my letter, but I shall tell it her as soon as I see her; it is the only thing to be done."

"You are raving!"

"Do you think she would not consent?" asked Volodia, somewhat uneasily.

"I don't know; it is impossible to answer for a girl of that age. But whether she consents or not, you ought to give up this mad freak."

"But then you must promise to help us."

"I'll help you where I can; but I don't think it is honourable to carry off a rich heiress."

Volodia stared at his brother in blank astonishment; he had never seen the elopement in this light.

"If Jenny had been a penniless girl, I might have helped you; who knows? I am no Puritan, and all means are fair to get away from such a very wicked step-mother. But she is an heiress, and knowing what the world would say——"

Volodia bowed his head in silent consent to this argument.

"Don't lose courage," continued Dmitry, slapping him on the shoulder. "It is too early for you to think of marriage. But you have the hope of reaching your aim, and with this you may quietly look the future in the face."

They were pacing the old lime avenue up and down, when the clattering of swift hoofs was heard in the courtyard. A moment later, the wicket-gate was opened, and the graceful figure of a young girl in a dark riding-habit appeared.

"Jenny! is it possible?" cried Volodia, rushing up to her, beside himself with joy.

An unusually bright flush burned on the young girl's cheeks. The quick ride, and a feeling of shame at the unconventional visit, had driven the blood to her face. She remained where she was, the train of her habit on her arm. She had never looked so enchanting to Volodia as at this moment. The dark-blue body fitted perfectly her pretty figure; her heavy tresses had loosened themselves, and fallen down on her back, her well-shaped feet, in their high riding-boots, peeped out under the skirt.

"Well, you are a brave little thing, Eugenia Alexandrovna," said Dmitry, approaching her with a smile. "I did not expect to see you as soon as this."

"I told you I would come, and I always keep my word."

In spite of these words, she looked dreadfully shy, and remained rooted to the spot, without knowing where to turn to. At last she followed the brothers to a bench opposite the house, and sat down on it, while Dmitry remained standing before them.

"With whom did you come? and how did they let you go?" he asked.

She blushed still more furiously while explaining how matters stood. Her eyes asked Dmitry beseechingly to protect her.

A great joy overflooded Volodia's heart: he now saw fulfilled what he had not dared dream of half an hour ago, and the greatness of this bliss almost frightened him.

Dmitry talked to her in a soothing tone. In his eyes beamed such a brotherly affection, and such a gay smile played round his lips, that he soon drove away the last vestige of her shyness.

"Who would think that in this capricious little head dwelt so much strength of mind and purpose?" he cried gaily.

"Alas! Dmitry Alexandrovitch," she said, quite openly, "when I reached Biälastolby I felt so wretched that I was on the point of turning back without entering the garden."

"And now you don't feel wretched any longer, do you?"

"No; only a little frightened," she answered pensively. "What would people say of me at Petersburg, if they knew?"

"Well, Petersburg is far from here, and here we are not severe; as for me, I feel ready to sink down at your feet and compose an ode in your honour, or do some such nonsense."

Jenny laughed outright; an unusual, careless fire burned in her eyes.

And now I'll tell you what, Eugenia Alexandrovna, you did not come here to chat with an old man like me, so I am going to disappear, in order not to worry you;" and, making her a deep, comical bow, Dmitry walked away towards the house. Jenny gave him a bright smile, but looked rather crestfallen.

"How shall I ever thank you?" cried Volodia, in a trembling voice.

She raised her large and truthful eyes to him, and he read in them the full confession of a love which surrendered itself gladly, and without condition, to the man her heart had chosen.

"Why thank me? I told your brother I should bring my answer myself, and here I am."

He bent towards her, and taking both her hands within his, whispered, almost inaudibly,—

"Answer! what answer? To the question my brother put to your step-mother?"

"Yes," she whispered shyly.

He bent still deeper down towards her, his voice being still more inaudible.

"You will be my wife, will you?"

He did not require an answer this time, nor would Jenny have been able to give it; he only pressed his burning lips on her cool hands. His heart was throbbing wildly, a passionate longing seized him to take her in his arms; but here, in the solitude of the garden, where she was entirely in his power, he dared not even

pass his arm round her waist; she had trusted him, and he must justify this trust. She drew her hands out of his, and, with a hardly perceptible movement, they both moved a little away from each other. They seemed to have suddenly grown older and left childhood behind them, and looking at life with the full earnestness of grown-up people, they planned out their future, deciding to spend three months of the year at Petersburg, where they would have a box at the opera, one at the French theatre, and two or three receptions a week. The rest of the time they would spend in the country, and Volodia was to become such a pattern of a landed proprietor and a marshal of noblesse as had never yet been seen in Russia. They would sometimes go abroad, for Jenny had never travelled. She expressed this wish in a rather bashful way, not knowing how Volodia looked upon it, but he readily consented; and they were both of the opinion that travelling was nothing but a long chain of enjoyment. While building their castles in the air, they forgot all about Elena's power to mar them; they only felt more and more deeply that the great charm of this paradisiacal, cloudless life did not consist in spending the winter in Petersburg, or in travelling abroad, but in the continual unbroken nearness to each other, which would make their two beings merge into one. All the rest paled and dwindled into nothing compared to this bliss.

But suddenly they both felt ill at ease; a shiver

ran through their frames, in spite of the sunny day; their eyes burned; their pulses beat wildly; it seemed to them as if there was something alarming in the air they breathed. Jenny got up, but her feet felt heavy, as if rooted to the soil.

"I should like to see Nadia," she said hesitatingly.

At this moment Nadia appeared on the terrace, leading Anna Grigorievna; Dmitry was following behind. Anna Grigorievna went towards Jenny, and greeted her tenderly, while Dmitry prepared the wheel-chair for her.

"You have grown since I saw you last, darling," she said, caressing her, and then sat down in her chair.

"Give us your blessing, mamma," said Volodia, coming forward; "Jenny is my affianced bride."

"Are you not in too great a hurry, my dear?" answered his mother, somewhat reproachfully; "it is much too early to think of marriage. Jenny has not yet the right to dispose of herself."

Jenny did not like this observation, and said, somewhat petulantly, that she had already pledged her word to Volodia.

"Why bind yourself so long beforehand, my dear child?" said Anna Grigorievna, turning towards her; "you are going abroad with your step-mother in a few days."

"Only for two months," interrupted Jenny.

"Who knows whether it may not be a year or two?"

Jenny bent her head. Yes, this was true; it might be years before she returned, and all her dreams and castles were built on the moving sand. Nadia went up to her and kissed her.

"I have not yet wished you joy, darling," Jenny said, taking her a little aside, for it seemed to her as if the warmest sympathy of all would be found with Nadia, who was herself in love, and who had fought so long and vainly for her new-found happiness."

"Do you know what I have contrived?" said Dmitry, on seeing his brother standing, quite bewildered and helpless, before his mother. "Uncle Peter has given up his trusteeship, and Jenny has the right to choose a new guardian; let her ask Count Sokolnitzky."

"What! That old scarecrow."

"Yes; 'that old scarecrow,' as you please to call him, is one of the noblest characters I ever met with. Besides, he is the only man Elena Michaïlovna would ever listen to."

When Jenny was told of this plan, she refused at first; the idea of having the old Count as a guardian drove her wild with fright. However, Dmitry succeeded in bringing her round.

"You know very well that the Count always submits to the witchery of a pair of beautiful eyes. Believe me, he will always be on your side."

The old Count, being honour itself, there was no fear of his ever siding with Elena to press his son's suit on Jenny. They all agreed with Dmitry that this would be the best possible thing.

"Provided he does not refuse," said Dmitry.

"Oh! that's my business," cried Jenny archly.

A whole hour was spent in this gay, sparkling conversation, of which not one word remained in their memory, but which left a general impression of sweetness and freshness on their minds. It was one of those rare, bright hours in life that have neither past nor future—entirely overflooded with sunshine, just as many a mountain-top is suddenly lit up by a ray of sunshine while black clouds are hovering over them. But suddenly, in the midst of a most hearty laugh, Jenny remembered that it must be rather late, and that she could not stay away for a whole day.

Dmitry and Volodia proposed to accompany her on her way home. They continued to laugh and to jest during the whole ride, just as if they were not threatened by a great separation. And even when the moment of separation came, when the village of Nikolsky rose before them, and they knew they must part, there was neither sadness nor alarm visible on their faces.

"We shall meet again at Petersburg," said Jenny.

"If not there, certainly somewhere else," answered Volodia.

In the meantime, an explanation of quite another

sort was taking place in Elena's small morning-room. Boroffsky had driven into the courtyard at Nikolsky just as Jenny, putting her horse to a canter, was leaving it. He went straight up to the sitting-room, saying,—

"Do you know that I met Eugenia Alexandrovna on horseback just now? She was quite unaccompanied."

Elena rang the bell, and was very much astonished to hear that the young girl had ordered her horse to be saddled, and had ridden out quite by herself.

"Tell me as soon as she returns," she said, dismissing the footman.

This freak of Jenny's occupied her mind less than the conversation she was going to have with Boroffsky.

"I have not been here for a long time," he began, "but you must excuse me. I have been so busy of late that I have been perfectly unable to pay any visits."

"Yes, I know. How tiresome it must be to have nothing to do but with politics! especially as you might easily be involved in disagreeable affairs with your own friends."

"This has not yet happened to me."

"But at Biälastolby, for instance. I suppose you disliked leading the trial, as you are so intimate with the whole family."

"First of all, I am not intimate at all with the

family; secondly, I was not present at the examination there."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed, gazing at him with well-feigned astonishment. "I happened to hear that a whole nest of conspirators was discovered there, and that Nadeshda Sergeïevna herself was somewhat involved in the riotings."

The look which she fastened on his face was so piercing that he turned away to avoid it.

"How much I pity poor Anna Grigorievna," she went on. "She adopted this girl in spite of her suspicious past. I am always so sorry to see kind-hearted people pay the penalty for their good works."

"But I think you are wrong here. Anna Grigorievna has never for a moment regretted that she took her niece into her house."

"Of course not," answered Elena, with a smile, "or she would never have consented to her marrying her eldest son. What, you don't know that they are engaged?"

Boroffsky's pale eyes flashed. He had indeed not heard of their engagement.

"This was why I pitied poor Anna Grigorievna so very much," Elena went on. "How hard it must have been to her to consent to such a marriage!"

"Do you know this positively?"

"Yes, I do."

I shall force him to betray himself, she thought.

Boroffsky involuntarily drew his chair nearer to that of Elena.

"Well, this is a nice alliance," he said, hardly able to hide his excitement; "for now, at least, the young girl who interests you so much is safe." "What can she be plotting?" he asked himself.

"What! you call that a nice alliance to marry a girl of such a dubious reputation? Don't you consider it your duty to open the Koretzkys' eyes before the marriage takes place?"

"I don't think I have the right to meddle with other people's affairs," answered Boroffsky, in a constrained voice. But in spite of the coldness of these words, he caught feverishly at the idea whether it would not be possible to prevent this marriage.

"Men always talk thus, and yet there are occasions where interference is a simple duty. For what have we judges and authorities if you allow a girl who has been busy in the propaganda to marry an honourable man?"

"Judges, authorities!" he laughed mockingly; "can they unravel riddles?"

Elena saw that he was quickly losing his self-possession, and that she might risk another step onward on the road of frankness.

"Then let us drop this subject. Let a former Nihilist make a brilliant marriage, be received everywhere; it is no business of mine. Yet, it would not have been so very difficult to discover something of

her past, or to bring her to confession. 'Where there's a will there's a way.'"

"Do you know any particulars?" asked Boroffsky; and his eyes again flashed.

"I? Oh, nothing at all; or, at least, nothing which the police might not have known if they had done their duty. But please let us drop this subject. It is not amusing at all, I assure you."

"All that I know," he answered, "is that Nadeshda Sergeïevna received the most extraordinary education. She fed upon modern ideas, was even at Zürich; but as for any crime——"

Elena told the story of Nadia with a studied unwillingness, putting together the fragments she had picked up here and there. He listened silently, without trying to hide his ardent curiosity.

"All this does not constitute any crime, certainly," she concluded; "but have you never condemned any one for less?"

The burning thirst of revenge which the news of Nadia's marriage had called forth rose more and more strongly in Boroffsky's heart, and he began to revolve in his mind whether it would not be possible to repay her for her offensive rejection of him and her preference of another.

"I can't meddle with this," he said, "as I am leaving in a few days."

"Do you think I want you to pursue this unhappy girl?"

Elena made a denying motion with her hand.

"Then all this is based only upon suppositions," he continued, without listening to her. "We have not the slightest proof."

"You think so!" She gazed steadfastly at him. His face expressed the most burning curiosity. "If I tell you something, will you promise me that it will remain between us?"

She got up, as if waiting for his answer. He followed her example. His silence ought to have struck her; but she only walked rapidly up to her writing-table, took the letter out of the drawer, and handed it to him.

"Read this," she said coldly. "This letter happened to fall into my hands, and I don't think I have the right to return it to its proprietor."

He read the address on the envelope, not mustering sufficient courage to take the letter out of it. Their eyes met. They understood each other, understood that the same feeling of hatred ruled them both, and that from this very minute they were confederates. Why did they blush before each other? Why did they feel ashamed?

Boroffsky perused the letter. His fingers trembled.

"It is not signed," he said.

"But then there is the address on the envelope; and the handwriting is clear enough, I think."

"There is not the slightest doubt that this has been written by the very man who succeeded in

escaping the police at Biälastolby. His handwriting is known to me."

He remembered having seen it in some papers which had been secured by the police. Again their eyes met. He tendered her the letter in an irresolute way.

"No; keep it," she said; "you might want it some day."

Neither Boroffsky nor Elena felt that contempt for each other which dishonourable motives almost always call forth; on the contrary, their unspoken thoughts seemed to create a strong invisible bond between them.

An hour later, when she followed her guest out on the landing-place to bid good-bye to him,—he had refused to stay for dinner,—she met Jenny hurrying upstairs.

"You disobeyed me in riding out alone," she said coldly and severely.

"I went to take leave of the Koretzkys," she answered simply.

Elena felt her helplessness against the resolute character of her step-daughter, and not wanting to quarrel with her, she only answered,—

"Very well; then know that we are going away in two days."

Jenny did not answer; the pure bliss of the last hours made her heart overflow with joy, and all the cares of the future seemed to have retreated to a

misty distance. She bent her head silently, and passed on to her own room.

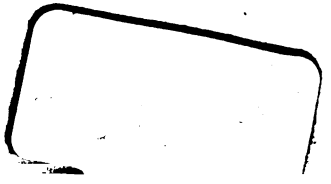
Two days later, Elena Michaïlovna left Nikolsky, with Jenny and Miss Finch, and went abroad for the autumn.

END OF VOL. II.

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.

FEB 8 1993

MAR 29 '93



FEB 3 1993

MAR 29 '93